

PASSED  
BY THE CENSOR

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WYTHE WILLIAMS





# PASSED BY THE CENSOR

THE EXPERIENCE OF AN  
AMERICAN NEWSPAPER MAN IN FRANCE

BY

WYTHE WILLIAMS

PARIS CORRESPONDENT OF THE NEW YORK TIMES,  
OFFICIALLY ACCREDITED TO THE FRENCH  
ARMIES ON THE WESTERN FRONT

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

MYRON T. HERRICK

FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE

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*TO VIOLA*

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## PREFACE

Special correspondents in great numbers have come from America into the European "zone of military activity," and in almost equal numbers have they gone out, to write their impressions, their descriptions, their histories, their romances and songs.

Other correspondents who are not "special," but who by the grace of the military authorities have been permitted to enter the forbidden territory, and by the favor of the censor have been allowed to tell what they saw there, have entered it again and again at regular intervals.

These are the "regular" correspondents, who lived in Europe before war was declared, and who during many idle hours speculated on what they would do with that great arm of their vocation—the cable—when the expected hour of conflict arrived.

Few of their plans worked out, and new ones were formed on the minute—on the second. For the Germans did not cut the cable, as some of the



## PREFACE

correspondents, in moments of despair, almost hoped they would do, and the great American public clamored insistently for the "news" with its breakfast.

It is a journalist's methods in covering the biggest, the hardest "story" that newspapers were ever compelled to handle, that this book attempts to describe.

WYTHE WILLIAMS.

Paris, October, 1915.

## AN ENDORSEMENT

BY GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

Former Premier of France.

“In the crowded picture which this American journalist has presented we recognize our men as they are. And he pronounces such judgment as to arouse our pride in our friends, our brothers and our children. Such a people are the French of to-day. They must also be the French of to-morrow. Through them France sees herself regenerate.

“Of our army, Mr. Wythe Williams says:

“‘It seems to me to be invincible from the standpoints of power, intelligence and humanity.’

“Is there not in that something like a judgment pronounced upon France before the people of the world? Where I am particularly surprised, I admit, is that the eye of a foreigner should have been so penetrating, and that our friendly guest should have coupled the idea of an ‘invincible’ army with the supreme ethical consideration of its ‘humanity.’

## AN ENDORSEMENT

“Mr. Wythe Williams is right to proclaim this, even though it is something of a stroke of genius for a non-Frenchman to have discovered it.”

—(From an editorial in *L'Homme Enchainé*.)



LETTER TO THE AUTHOR FROM  
SENATOR LAFAYETTE YOUNG

*My Dear Williams:*

I am glad to know that you are going to write about the war in book form. In doing this you are discharging a plain duty. You have been in the war from the start. You have studied the soldier in the trench, and out. You have witnessed every phase of battle. The war is in your system. You are full of it. Therefore, you can write concerning it with inspiration and fervor.

I remember our long marches in and near the trenches in Northern France in April and May, last. I know how deeply you are interested; therefore, I know how well you will write.

A thousand historians will write books concerning the present great conflict, but the real historians will be the honest, independent observers such as you have been.

Newspaper reports will be the basis of every battle's history.

Take the battle of the Marne, for instance. Who knows so well concerning it as men like your-

## LETTER FROM SENATOR YOUNG

self, who were in Paris or near it during the seven days' conflict?

The passing years may bring dignified historians who will compose sentences which shall sound well, but none of them will be so full of real history as your volume if you write your own experiences.

I never knew a man freer from prejudice, and at the same time fuller of enthusiasm than yourself. I want you to write your book with the same free hand you write for the *New York Times*. Forget for the time that you are writing a book.

I am pleased to know that you have been with the army several times since I parted company with you. This, with your experience as an ambulance driver, when the first hostilities were on, has certainly made you a military writer worth while.

I count you to be one of the three best and most truthful American correspondents who have been in the war from the start.

I am hoping the time will come when these wars shall end, when bright men like yourself shall return to the work of journalism in America.

With greatest affection, I subscribe myself,

LAFAYETTE YOUNG.

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## AN INTRODUCTION

By MYRON T. HERRICK,

Former United States Ambassador to France.

The rigid censorship placed on journalism upon the declaration of war in Europe brought the representatives of the American press into close relationship with the Embassy. The news which they brought to the Embassy and such news as they received there, required unusual discretion, frankness and confidence on the part of all concerned in order that the American public should receive accurate information, while avoiding the commission of any improprieties against the countries involved in the great conflict.

In this supreme test the American newspaper representatives appreciated that they were something more than mere purveyors of news; they arose to the full comprehension of their responsibility, and were of invaluable assistance to the Embassy, and through it to the nation.

While there has been no opportunity to read the advance sheets of this book, my confidence in the

## INTRODUCTION

character and ability of the author, begotten in those days when real merit, and demerit as well, were revealed, makes it a pleasure to write this foreword, and to commend this volume unseen.

(Signed)

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to John J. Brand, as indicated by the text below. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Cleveland, Ohio, October 19th, 1915.

## A FOREWORD

At the outbreak of the European war, the author, who was then stationed in Paris as the correspondent of the *New York Times*, was refused, with all other correspondents, any credentials permitting him to enter the fighting area. He entered it later, immediately after the battle of the Marne, with what were in Paris considered sufficient credentials. But he was arrested, returned to Paris as a prisoner of war and lodged in the Cherche Midi prison, the famous military prison, where Dreyfus was confined. He was released upon the intervention of Ambassador Herrick, but still baffled in getting to the front as a war correspondent, he volunteered for service in the Red Cross as an orderly on a motor ambulance. A few of the descriptions in the following pages are written from notes made during the two months he remained in that service.

At the beginning of 1915, the author was officially accredited as a correspondent attached to the French army, and at the beginning of Feb-

## FOREWORD

ruary sent to his paper the longest cable despatch permitted to pass the censor since the beginning of the war, and the first authentic detailed description of the French forces after the battle of the Marne.

The following spring, at the height of the first great French offensive north of Arras, the famous ground, every yard of which is stained with both French and German blood, the author was selected by the French Ministry of War as the only neutral correspondent permitted there. The first description given to America of the battle of the Labyrinth was the result.

Since then the author has made a number of trips to the front, always under the escort of an officer of the Great General Headquarters Staff, and has seen practically the entire line of the French trenches, up to the moment of the autumn offensive in Champagne. He was the first American correspondent to foreshadow this offensive in a long cable to his paper at the end of August, in which he asserted that the attack would commence "before the leaves are red," that being the only wording of the facts permitted by the censor, but which exactly timed the date of the action. A few of the following chapters have been rewritten from the author's article published in the *New*



## FOREWORD

*York Times*, to which acknowledgment is made for permission to use such material. The author however wishes alone to stand sponsor for the sentiments and opinions expressed throughout the volume.



PART ONE  
THE HECTIC WEEK



# PASSED BY THE CENSOR

## CHAPTER I

### THE DAY

A MEMBER of the Garde Republicaine, whose duty was to keep order in the court, was creating great disorder by climbing over the shoulders of the mob in the press section. He ousted friends of the white-faced prisoner in the dock, to make room for a fat reporter from *Petit Parisien*, who ordinarily did finance but was now relieving a confrère at the lunch hour. The case in court was that of the famous affaire Caillaux and all the world was reading bulletins concerning its progress as fast as special editions could supply them.

I was sitting in the last of the over-crowded rows allotted to the press, but filled with whoever got there first. I was one of the few Americans permitted to cover this important "story" first hand, instead of having to write my nightly cables from reports in the evening papers.



As the *Petit Parisien* man wheezed and jostled his way to a seat on the bench just in front of me, I caught some words he flung to a friend in passing. Maitre Labori was proclaiming the innocence of the prisoner with all the fervor for which he is celebrated, and I was wondering how soon an adjournment would let us escape from the stifling heat of the room. It was the latter part of July, 1914; and true to French custom all of the windows were shut tight.

The words of the fat reporter pricked my flagging attention, "There is a panic on the Bourse."

The words caused a buzz of comment all around me. One English journalist, monocled and superior, even stopped his writing, and the financial reporter, his fat body half crowded into his seat, paused midway to add: "The Austrian note to Serbia that has got them all scared."

Another French newspaperman some seats away overheard the talk and joined in loudly. It did not matter how much we talked during the proceedings of the affaire Caillaux. Everybody talked. Often everybody talked at the same moment. This journalist prefaced his remarks by a derisive laugh.

"They are crazy on the Bourse," he said. "You may be sure that nothing matters now in

France but this trial. No panic, or Austrian note, or Russian note or anything, will rival it as a newspaper story, I am certain."

The fat reporter again wheezed into speech.

"I do not know very much concerning this affaire Caillaux," he replied, "but I will bet you money that the verdict will not get a top headline."

"Why?" cried some of us, mocking and incredulous.

"Because of what I've told you. There is a panic on the Bourse."

The presiding judge announced the luncheon adjournment; we trooped to the basement restaurant of the Palais de Justice. I found myself sitting at a table with the superior Englishman. We discussed the qualities of French cuisine for a moment; then he said:

"It will be jolly annoying if this Bourse business develops into war, you know."

This was the first mention that I remember of the word "war" in connection with the events that followed so fast for the next few weeks, that now as I look back upon them, they do not seem real at all. One week to the day following this luncheon, I remember saying to a fellow newspaper correspondent, "Is it a week, or is it a year,

since we had Peace in the world?" But at the first mention of the word—the first premonition of the nearness of the tragedy that was descending upon Europe—I remember signaling somewhat abstractedly to a waiter, and giving him an order for food.

Every one of the Americans who covered that session of the Caillaux trial had lived in Europe for years; and the majority were to remain as onlookers of the great war that had been so long predicted. But on this day none of us realized, and none of us knew; and that was the greater part of all our troubles.

I remember a conversation only a few weeks before all this happened, with Mr. Charles R. Miller, the editor of the *New York Times*, who was passing through Paris on his return to New York from Carlsbad. He asked me when I intended going home, and I replied to him as I had to many others:

"Not until they pull off this war over here. I have been in the newspaper game ever since I left college, but I have never been lucky enough to cover a war. So I do not propose to miss this one."

Then came the invariable question:

"When do you think it will come?"

I had my reply ready. All of us had made it many times.

"Oh, perhaps in a few years. Perhaps it will not be so very long."

The next remark of at least half the persons with whom I discussed the question was, "Pooh, pooh, there'll never be a European war." Mr. Miller only said, "What will you do when it comes?"

Again the reply was pat to hand, but how vague it seems now, in the light of then fast approaching events! It was:

"There will be warning enough to make our plans for beating the censor, I am certain."

It is easy enough to look back now and declare that incidents such as Agadir, the Balkan war and Sarejebo should have been sufficient handwriting on the wall. All those affairs were exactly that, but we simply could not grasp the idea, that actual Armageddon could come without at least months of announcement—time enough for all of us to make our plans. In this I do not think we should be blamed, for we followed so exactly the fatuous beliefs of even foreign ministries. That the great moment should come in a week never entered our imaginations.

We filed back to the court room on that after-

noon of the Caillaux trial and fought for the last time the twice daily battle for our seats. I sat beside the superior Englishman. We listened idly to famous politicians and famous doctors and famous lawyers garbling as best they could the dead question of the murder of Gaston Calmette, and the more burning though irrelevant one as to whether Joseph Caillaux was a traitor.

My companion and I discovered that our arrangements for a summer vacation included the same tiny Brittany hamlet by the sea. We passed a portion of the afternoon making mutual plans for the coming month, and at the adjournment drove away from the ancient building on the banks of the Seine in the same fiacre, both trying to align the chief features of the day's sitting, and planning the writing of our night's despatches.

After an hour at my desk that evening, I remember turning to Mr. Walter Duranty, my chief assistant, and saying, "It is about two thousand words to-night. With all the direct testimony that the Associated Press is sending, it ought to lead the paper to-morrow morning. Mark it 'rush.' "

"But about this panic on the Bourse story! Don't you think we should send a special on that?" Mr. Duranty asked.



"Why?" I questioned.

"Because there is an Austrian brokerage firm that has been selling like mad—started all the trouble; it is the identical firm that two years ago—" His voice broke off suddenly. "Listen!" he then shouted. We made a rush to the front windows looking upon the Boulevard des Italiens near the Opera.

The street was seething, which signified exactly nothing, for the Caillaux case had kept the boulevards stirred up for days.

"They are yelling, 'Down with Caillaux!'" I said, as we tore open the window sashes.

"No—it's something else."

We leaned far out. Under the lights moved thousands of heads. Hundreds were reading the latest editions, but in the middle of the road a mob was surging, and we heard a monotonous cry. It was a cry heard that night in Paris for the first time in forty-four years.

The mob was shouting, "To Berlin!"

I slammed shut the window. "Cut that Caillaux cable to a thousand words," I yelled, as I seized my hat, ran down the stairs, and plunged into the crowd, snatching the latest editions as I ran.

The Austro-Serb and Russian news had become

worse within a few hours, and there were already rumors of Franco-German frontier incidents. I hurried along the boulevards, calling at the offices of the *Matin* and the *London Daily Mail*, but could get no inside information; nothing but official announcements which would be cabled by the news agencies, and did not interest me, the correspondent of a paper receiving all agency matter.

Later I returned to my office, cabled a story that pictured the scene in the boulevards and gave some details concerning the Austrian brokerage firm that had precipitated the trouble on the Bourse by its selling orders. My paper alone carried the next morning the significant information that this same Austrian house, with high Vienna connections, had made an enormous fortune just two years before, when it had accurate and precise information concerning the hour that the conflict in the Balkans would begin.

This story was a "beat"—probably it was the first "beat" of the European war, but it was almost lost in the mass of heavy despatches that on that night began crowding the cables from every capital in Europe. The next morning probably every newspaper in the world led its columns with the subject of war. Even in Paris the affaire Caillaux was relegated to the second page.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NIGHT

A "BEAT" or a "scoop," otherwise known as exclusive news, is a great matter to a newspaper man. To "put over a beat" gives soul satisfaction, but to be beaten causes poignant feeling of another sort.

There have been some great beats and a multitude of little ones, but up to the beginning of the European war, the greatest beat that was ever put over came from a Paris correspondent.

This was the occasion when Henri de Blowitz, the famous representative of the *London Times*, gave the full text of the treaty of Berlin before the hour when it was actually signed. That was a real beat, not to be classified with the majority of beats of later years, which were often scandalous, more often paltry, and which often caused us to wonder whether they were worth the cable tolls.

In ante-bellum discussions, the Paris correspondents often opined that the coming conflict would

open a more important field. At least we would no longer chronicle the silly ways of fashion and the crazy ways of society. The turf, the mannequin, the Rue de la Paix, and those who drank tea at the Pré Catalan would give way to real and stirring matters. We all schemed to put over a real beat as soon as the war drums began to roll and the new Paris was revealed. The old Paris, in the minds of American editors, had only been an important place for unimportant things.

Looking back now at the beginnings of Armageddon, and at the particular corner in which I performed a minor rôle, I can say generally that all our schemes went wrong and that there were no "beats" of the slightest importance secured by anybody. Remember, I am only speaking of Paris and France. There were a few great beats elsewhere. There was the famous "scrap of paper" interview given to the Associated Press. There were some exclusive interviews secured in both Germany and England. But France, the real theater of action, where beats were expected, was quite the equal of Japan in her sudden tight sealing of every crevice from which news either big or little might leak.

France had learned several lessons from the year 1870, but this one she learned almost too well.

So far as the neutral opinion of the world was concerned, it was scarcely known that France had an army. Later, but much later, and then very gradually, some real stories were passed by the censor—but even then very few of them were beats.

But during the hectic week when France went to war the censorship was almost overlooked and there were a few precious hours during which the correspondents and their methods of communication were free. The first sign of the censor was the shutting off of the telephone between Paris and London. It had been my custom to talk with our London office nightly in order that the news of the two capitals might be checked, and that we might not duplicate stories.

The second night following the events of the foregoing chapter I talked to our London bureau for the last time. All that day my mind had been busy with one idea: "If war is declared, how can we beat the censor?"

The first answer that probably occurred to every correspondent was: "Code." Alas, events moved too quickly. A secret code was a matter that might have been arranged had we been given our expected months of notice, but there was no time now.



I gave the call for our London office, however, with this idea still uppermost in mind. I waited a quarter of an hour to be put through. Then I heard the voice of my colleague. It sounded harassed. I shall never forget his first remark after the communication was established. I could almost see him pass a hand over a fevered brow; I could almost hear the sigh that I am sure accompanied the words which were:

"My gracious, I never expected to live to see such days as these!"

It was quite natural that he should have said just that, but somehow there did not seem any fitting reply. Also it seemed rather hopeless to talk about codes. So I said:

"I am told that we will not be allowed to telephone after to-night."

He replied: "That's a fact. I guess this is good-by for a while." He paused—then as an afterthought, added: "I think you would better just send everything you can from Paris without paying any heed to whether London does or not."

Inasmuch as a moment had arrived when there was only one possible way to do many things, I quite agreed with him.

The conversation lagged.

"Well, good-by," I shouted.

“Good-by,” he replied, “and good luck.”

That was the end of the telephone as an adjunct to transatlantic journalism. I have never spoken with our London office from that night.

After hanging up the receiver I had an idea.

It did not and does not now seem a particularly brilliant one; but, again, it was the only possible thing to do. I turned to Mr. Duranty and said:

“We will have a little race with the censor. We will crowd everything possible on the cable before he gets on the job.”

All the late editions were on my desk. I clipped and pasted everything of interest on cable forms and sent them to the Bourse. Mr. Duranty took them himself, “just to see if there were any signs of the censor,” as he expressed it. Then I began to write, interrupted continually by my dozen extra assistants. I had hired every free-lance newspaper man I could find—and I had also a number of volunteers, young American visitors, too interested in events to be in a hurry to get out of the city.

The night was warm and the windows all open. The boulevards were dense with shouting people. There was no mistaking the cries on this night. “À Berlin—À Berlin,” echoed above the roar of the traffic and the mob. Cuirassiers frequently

rode through the streets but the crowd immediately surged in behind them.

At ten o'clock the concierge mounted to protest against the street door being open. She was afraid. She was alone in the *loge*. I told her that the business of the office required the doors kept unlocked. She went away and in a few moments came back with the proprietor of the building, whom she had called by telephone. He insisted on closing the street door. I told him this was a violation of my lease. In view of the circumstances he persisted in his demand. I wheeled my chair about and said to him:

"This office remains open—all night if I desire. It is a newspaper office and we cannot close. If you interfere with me I guarantee that I will keep a man there, but if necessary that man will be a soldier."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that I will apply to the American Embassy for the protection of my rights as an American citizen."

He went away and that difficulty ended.

I turned back to my work. I wrote thousands of words that night; when not writing I was dictating, and piecing together the reports of my assistants.

Mr. Duranty returned from the Bourse. His clothes were awry and he was trembling with excitement. He had diverged, in his return trip, to the Gare du Nord, to get a story of the stormy scenes there—thousands, chiefly Americans, fighting for places in the trains for England. He had been arrested, he explained. Oh, yes, he had been surrounded by a mob at the Gare, who spotted him as a foreigner, and the police had rescued him. He explained his identity and was released.

At the end of the story he suddenly leaped across the room to the window. I leaped at the same moment and so did the stenographer. Across the boulevard was a store that dealt in objects of art. The proprietor was a German. During the day he had boarded the place with stout planks. As we reached the window the sound of splitting and tearing planks sounded above even the cries and roars of the angry people. One look and Duranty was out of the office and in the street.

I sat in the window and watched the mob do its work. The torn planks were used as battering rams through the plate glass, through the expensive statuary and costly vases. In five minutes the place was a ruin. Then the cuirassiers came and drove the crowd away. Duranty returned

with the details of the story. I asked him what the police had said to the crowd.

“A man came out holding a marble Adonis by the arm,” he replied. “A cop said to him, ‘Be good now—be good!’ and the chap replied, ‘Well, if I can’t smash it, you smash it!’—So the cop took it and leaped upon it with both feet.”

“Write it,” I said; “also the Gare du Nord story.”

It was midnight and the uproar was greater than ever. Processions blocks long wended through the middle of the streets singing the “Marseillaise,” the “Carmagnole” and other fire-eating songs of the Revolution. Through it all I worked, and steadily sent messenger after messenger to the Bourse with the latest news from the various scenes of action. No signs yet of the censor.

About one o’clock the crowd concentrated just below my window. The cries grew fiercer and louder, with a more terrible note. I went to the window. The faces of the mob were turned to an upper window of the building next door. Some rash voice had shouted from that window a cry that no man might shout that night in Paris with safety. He had cried: “Hurrah for Germany!”

I crawled out on my window ledge and watched.



The crowd filled the street completely. They watched that upper window, they yelled their rage and they battered against a great grilled iron door that baffled their efforts. The police tried to disperse them, but as soon as the street was partly cleared they surged back again. They hung about that door, their faces turned up, the hate showing in their eyes, their mouths open, bellowing forth their rage. They waited as patiently as wolves that have surrounded a quarry that must come out to meet them soon. But the waiting was so long that I crawled back from my window ledge into the office.

I finished a despatch that I had compiled from various documents given out to the morning papers by the Foreign Ministry, and of which I had secured a copy. They were an undisputable proof that Germany meant war on France, for they noted a dozen incidents proving that German mobilization had been under way for days. The dawn was breaking as I pushed my chair from the desk.

I told the stenographer and other assistants to go home and get some sleep—not to report again until late afternoon. Duranty, who, like myself, kept no hours but worked always while there was work to do, sauntered into the private room. He

had counted the words of copy that had been filed that night—nearly twenty thousand.

The yelling of the mob below had given way to low rumbling. We had ceased to think about it. We lighted our pipes and yawned.

“Shall we cut it out for a few hours?” Duranty asked.

“Think so,” I replied. “We will hunt a cab and go home until noon.”

I stifled another yawn and relighted my pipe.

A scream came from the sidewalk—my pipe dropped to the floor and we were out on the window ledge.

A man was struggling in the middle of the street. He was the man who had so rashly shouted “Vive l’Allemagne” from the window.

He fell and passed out of sight under a mass of bodies. The crowd opened once. The man struggled to his knees. His face was covered with blood. Again we lost sight of him. Then cuirassiers charged down the street. One of them lifted a broken body across his saddle. That story never reached New York. The censor was on the job.

## CHAPTER III

### HERRICK

ON the morning of September 3, 1914, an "official statement," so called, was inserted by the American Ambassador, Myron T. Herrick, in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*. This announcement read:

"The American Ambassador advises, as he has done before, that all Americans who can go, leave Paris, for obvious reasons."

The French Government was then most anxious to get every foreigner possible out of Paris. A siege was imminent and the food question might become very grave. Preparations were made for taking out the British residents. Mr. Herrick arranged with General Galliéni, then the Military Governor, for trains to transport a thousand of them a day, the British Government furnishing the money.

I now have Mr. Herrick's permission to state for the first time, that the American Embassy was then in receipt of a telegram from Mr. Gerard,

our Ambassador in Berlin, in which he said in substance that the German General Staff "advises you and all Americans to leave Paris at once by Rouen and Havre."

For a considerable length of time there was practically no doubt that there would be a siege, and very many believed it would be followed by a German entry into Paris. What happened at Louvain seemed reasonably likely to be repeated at the Louvre; in fact, it was well known to the Government that the German plan was to blow up Paris section by section until the French were forced to capitulate.

When the ministry changed and Delcassé and Millerand came into power, there was a change also in policy, and it was determined that the city should be defended.

On the morning of September second, the President of the Republic summoned Mr. Herrick to the Elysée, to thank him for remaining in Paris. He added that "We propose to defend the city at the outer gates, at the inner gates, and by the valor of our troops, and there will be no surrender."

Under these circumstances the advice to Americans was inserted in the *Herald*. I called on Mr. Herrick immediately after the notice was written.

He said to me: "What explanation can be made if no such warning is given, and if there is a siege, with many killed and wounded, in face of the situation as it is to-day, and of the warning telegram I have received from Berlin?"

The question has since been asked, sometimes critically, as to why this warning was given, since after all the Germans did not enter Paris. I have therefore given these heretofore unpublished facts at the beginning of this chapter, in order that it shall be known just how faithfully our ex-ambassador guarded his trust to the American people, to give an insight into the character of the man who was easily the most remarkable figure in Paris at the beginning of the war, who was not only the rock upon which the thousands of Americans leaned so heavily, but was also an outstanding favorite of the Paris public.

On one of the nights just preceding mobilization, when the boulevards were at the zenith of their frenzy, I looked out my office window and saw an open carriage, with footmen wearing ambassadorial livery and cockades, driving slowly along the Boulevard des Capucines. Voices snarled in the crowd. Certain ambassadors were not popular in Paris in those days; so just who



might this ambassador be, at that moment straining his eyes to read a paper under the electric arc lights?

He looked up as he heard the hoots directed at himself—then smiled and shouted something at the crowd.

“Ah, l’Ambassadeur Americain!” they passed the word. Then rose cries of “Vive l’Amérique!—Vive Herrick!” Men jumped on the carriage steps and Mr. Herrick shook their hands. Banter was exchanged on all sides, and cheers followed him down the boulevard. The Paris public felt then what they came to know later, that he liked them almost as much as “his Americans.” They knew, when the French Government went to Bordeaux, that the American Embassy remained—that the eye of the great neutral republic would see what happened should the Germans enter their city.

The later significant comment made by Mr. Herrick, when a German taube dropped bombs on a spot he had just passed, that “A dead ambassador might be more useful than a live one,” has been written in the history of France. And when the war is over I believe that the names of Franklin, Jefferson and Herrick will constitute a triumvirate of American ambassadors to France, that

all French school children of the future will be taught to remember and respect.

I passed much time at the Embassy during the first weeks of war, for it was a real center of news for an American newspaper. And I remember quite distinctly a statement that I made at home during one of the rare moments when I was able to reach it and which I repeated many times afterwards. It was a simple "Thank God that Myron T. Herrick is the American Ambassador." To the mild inquiry "why?" I could only say: "Because he is such an honest-to-God sort of man."

Mr. Herrick was undoubtedly shrewd in his friendships for newspapermen and he was clever in his use of them. But he always knew that we understood his cleverness and he always saw to it that we got value received in the way of "copy" for the praise that was often bestowed upon him as the result of it.

Mr. Herrick often said to us, in a manner quite casual, things that he had thought over carefully before our arrival. He knew just how those cables would look in the newspaper columns, and what the effect would be upon the reader, long before he handed out the subject matter. But if I ever argued to myself that I was receiving a

rather *intime* portrait of a clever and an astute diplomat, I could always honestly say, especially during the eventful days I am attempting to describe, that he was one man in Paris whose poise was undisturbed by the rapid succession of giant shocks, and that all the things which he did and said were to his everlasting credit and honor.

The American correspondents were sometimes referred to as "journalistic attachés" of the Embassy. We went there regularly, and it was ordered that our cards be taken to "His Excellency" the moment that we arrived.

He sometimes revealed to us "inside information" which, had we been able to print it, would have been, to say the least, sensational. On one occasion when he did not extract the suspicion of a promise that I preserve secrecy, Mr. Herrick told me a story which, if published to-day, would cause one of the biggest sensations of the war. But it is a story that can be printed only when the war is over, and perhaps not then, unless Mr. Herrick himself then gives permission.

Since leaving Paris, however, he has "released for publication" some things that could not for various reasons be printed at that time. For instance, when the French Government moved to Bordeaux, the American banks in Paris were in-

clined to follow them and in fact did send considerable amounts of money there. Mr. Herrick told them that he wished them to remain; that their services were necessary to carry on the relief work for the German and Austrian refugees, and other charities of which he was in charge. He told them they might use the Embassy cellar for their money, that there was a row of vaults across the cellar and under the sidewalk. At one time, when the German peril was most extreme those vaults contained more than three million dollars in gold, which was guarded night and day by six marines from the U. S. S. *Tennessee*.

Also, in order to avoid panic, we could not print at that time, that the Embassy expected any day a rush of refugees; Mrs. Herrick had stocked the Embassy cellars with provisions for a thousand persons for several weeks. Mrs. Herrick, too, proved herself an excellent executive, for not only did she take this entire burden of preparing for the Americans, should the Germans enter Paris, but at the same time she organized a hospital at the American Art Club and vigorously assisted French as well as American charities.

I feel now that a sufficient period has passed for the publication in more detail of some of the

memorable interviews that took place in the private room of the Embassy. At the time some of them were printed in the form of short cablegrams; but more often lost in the rush of events.

I shall never forget a talk that took place just two days before the declaration of war.

Mr. Herrick was sitting at his big, flat-topped desk smoking a cigarette and looking out of the open window. He waved his hand toward the cigarette box as he greeted me and pointed at a chair. He continued looking out of the window, but I knew that he saw nothing. There were no preliminaries; only one subject interested every mind in Paris.

"What do you know?" I asked.

"It's bad," he replied.

"Any fresh developments?"

"None you don't already know—but come again to-night and I'll tell you anything I learn."

"What will you do with the Americans—the town is full of them? What about them if it comes?" I next asked. We always referred to the war as just "it."

"Take care of 'em," he announced briefly—then a pause; and he laughed. "Don't know yet that they'll need it—let's hope it won't come."

"But you expect it?"



He looked me directly in the face as he slowly answered:

"Yes—it's only a question of days—or hours."

We both drew long breaths.

"And—" I began; but he went on talking slowly and heavily.

"It's what the Orient has waited for—waited for all these centuries—the breaking down of Occidental civilization—" He drew himself up with a jerk. "But that's too much like pessimism. Have a cigarette. I've got to keep smiling, you know. That's part of an ambassador's job."

And he did keep smiling. There were few moments during all those days when there was not a smile upon his face and an honest welcome in his manner. But once I saw him angry.

He was furiously angry at certain information I had brought to the Embassy. It was the first day after the military order that all foreigners residing in Paris should register at their local police commissariats within twenty-four hours. The city was no longer a city officially. It was an intrenched camp. Only military law prevailed. The penalty for not obeying orders was severe, and for the thousands of Americans to obey the order in question was manifestly impossible. I myself had no police permit—not even

a passport. I had no time to go near a police station. My wife telephoned that at our commissariat the line of waiting foreigners was about eight hundred. She flatly declined to take her turn—permit or no permit. I suggested that she go home; but later I heard disquieting rumors, that there had been several arrests of foreigners unable to show a *permis de séjour*. I did not blame the police, for the city was full of spies; but I could see no good reason why the Americans should suffer and I went full speed to the Embassy to put the facts before the Ambassador.

His face changed color. His hands gripped the sides of his chair.

“Say that over again,” he said quietly.

I repeated. Suddenly both his hands left the arms of his chair, and doubled into fists, crushed down upon his desk.

“By God,” he shouted, half rising, his jaw thrust forward. “By God, they won’t arrest any of *my* people.”

He pushed a button on the desk, at the same time calling the name of one of the Embassy secretaries. Rapidly and explosively outlining the situation, the Ambassador finished with the order:

“Now you get to the Foreign Office quick; and

let them know that if one American is arrested for not having his papers, until this rush at the commissariat is over, it means trouble—that they'll answer to me for it.”

I believe this incident more correctly illustrates the character of the ex-ambassador than anything one could say or write about him. When he came first to France, with a reputation as a successful Ohio politician, no one knew whether he was a real diplomat or not. I do not believe Mr. Herrick knew himself; but I do not believe that either then or later he ever thought much about it. He had sufficient *savoir faire* to make him greatly admired and respected by the French people, and his record proves whether or not he was a good diplomat. But there were moments, such as the one I have described, when he did not stop to consider whether or not an ambassador was supposed to be a diplomat.

I can picture other ambassadors I have known going over in their minds the rules of diplomacy and then delicately, oh, how delicately, approaching the subject. Herrick sometimes rode roughshod over all rules of diplomacy. He did it successfully, too—for there were no Americans arrested in France for not having their *permis de séjour*.

I have seen multi-millionaires standing in line at the Embassy, waiting their turn to get temporary passports; and I have seen powerful politicians and trust magnates waiting in the hall outside that famous private room, while Mr. Herrick talked to a little school teacher from Nebraska who had arrived earlier in the morning and secured a position ahead of them in the line.

I have seen him walk through the salons of his residence, which he kept open night and day to hundreds of Americans who felt safer just to be there, smiling, shaking hands and telling stories, although I knew he had not slept for twenty-four hours. And I have waked him up at midnight to tell him details concerning American refugees and their suffering which only he could alleviate and which he did alleviate without sleeping again until the work was done.

I witnessed many things in company with Mr. Herrick behind the scenes of the mighty drama as it was unfolding; most of them I am sure it would not be good "diplomacy" on my part to repeat. But all of them combined to make more fervent my thanks to the Almighty that in those days Myron T. Herrick was the American Ambassador to France.

## CHAPTER IV

### LES AMÉRICAINS

My first and most poignant recollection of the thousands of Americans caught in France at the outbreak of war is in connection with a cable containing some five thousand of their names, which was killed by the censor on the ground that it was code. I worked hard on that cable, too. I compiled it in the hope that it would relieve the anxiety of friends and relatives at home. But the censor, after pondering over the Smiths, Jones, Adamses and Wilsons in the list, believed that I had evolved a scheme to outwit the authorities and that important war news would be published if it were allowed to pass.

I have lived long enough in France to know when not to argue. In this case I was meekly and respectfully silent. The censor said it was code—therefore it must be code. He even refused to pass a private message to my editors, who had asked for all the names of Americans that I could get, in which I said that I had tried



to meet their wishes but had failed. This, too, the censor thought had a hidden meaning.

The story of the Americans alone would have been almost the biggest that a newspaper man ever had to handle, had it not been for the fact that after all they were only incidental to a far bigger matter. Naturally they did not consider that they could be of lesser importance than anything. Also, the New York editors thought them almost, if not quite, as important as the declaration of war. Unfortunately newspaper correspondents, even Americans, located in the capital of a belligerent power, had officially to think with the authorities, and let the story of the Americans take what place it could find in the jumble of greater and lesser news. True, their story was covered—after a fashion—and the world knew what a real sort of a man the American Ambassador was in the way he protected his people. But most of the tragedy and nearly all of the comedy—much of it was comedy—was lost in the roll of drums.

In those days Europe was for Europeans. As I recall the Americans now, it seems to me that no nation finding herself in such a position as France, could have treated so patiently, so unselfishly, so kindly, as she, the strangers within

her gates. As for the strangers, alas, many of them felt distinctly aggrieved that war should come to spoil their summer holidays and bitterly resented their predicament. They ignored the fact that France was fighting for her life.

Their predicament, after all, was not so serious. After all, no American died; no American was wounded; no American even starved. Their troubles were really only inconveniences; but none of them would believe that Uhlans would not probably ride down the Champs Elysées the following morning, shouting "hands up" to the population.

I visited one afternoon the office of the White Star Line, jammed as usual with white-faced, anxious-voiced Americans seeking passage home. The veteran Paris manager of the line was behind the counter. He was speaking to a frightened woman in tones sufficiently clear to be heard by everybody.

"I speak from personal experience, madam," he told the woman. "I know that there will be plenty of room for everybody just as soon as mobilization is over. In two weeks the situation will be much easier."

"How do you know?" was the question. "What is your experience?"

His answer should have brought assurance, had assurance been at all possible.

"I was here in eighteen-seventy," he replied.

The prediction was nearly right. It took longer than two weeks to clear the ways; but when the battle of the Marne began, almost the last batch of tourists were at Havre, awaiting their boat.

The American newspaper correspondents who remained were looked upon as fools. The tourists could not understand our point of view that perhaps, after all, Paris instead of Belgium would produce the biggest story of the war.

I was on one amusing occasion the "horrible example" of the man who would not leave town, in a little sidewalk drama whose stellar rôle was played by one of the best known American actors. On one of the first evenings after mobilization I decided to go to our consulate, then in the Avenue de l'Opera, in order to learn the number of people applying for aid and learn if possible the approximate number of American tourists in Paris.

It was late. When I reached the consulate it was closed, but a large crowd remained waiting on the sidewalk. I learned from the concierge that the staff had departed for the night. As I

turned to go I met William H. Crane, the comedian, entering the building. I told him the place was shut, and we stood in the doorway talking.

The benevolent face and gray hair of Mr. Crane marked him with the crowd, and they immediately decided that if he was not the Consul General himself, he was at least a person of highest importance in the affairs of our Government. A group of school teachers timidly approached. I spoke to him quickly in French.

“You can act off the stage, can’t you?”

He muttered something about getting away quickly, but I seized his coat lapel, saying: “Look here, there are many persons in this line and they have picked you out to be the big chief. The consulate is closed and if you don’t play your part they will stand here all night. They are desperate.”

Crane hesitated—then walked down the line, hearing each tale of woe and giving advice. He remained an hour, until the last question was asked and the last tourist satisfied. But he insisted that I remain with him. He told them all that I was so unfortunate as to live in Paris, that I had a house and family there, and that I had no possible chance to get out. And so, he argued, how much better off were they than “this mis-

erable person," for they would surely get away in few days or weeks at the latest. As they did.

My last recollection of *les Américains* with which the word poignant might be used, was the morning before the battle of the Marne. It appeared certain to all of us who remained that the entry of the Germans could be only a question of hours. I, however, was fairly happy that day, for at four o'clock that morning my family had left the city for safety. The American Ambassador had told me confidentially something I already knew—that Paris was no longer a safe place for women and children. I had set forth my own belief for days, but my wife had remained. However, she was a great believer in the American Ambassador. So when I gave her the "confidential information"—and I set it forth strong—she consented to go to England.

I walked the streets that morning feeling a load off my mind. I had been up all night, getting my little family off and inasmuch as the day was too important for sleep, I took a refreshing bath and then strolled along the empty Boulevard des Capucines. I had found a shady nook on a sidewalk *terrasse* when some one touched me on the arm. I turned and looked into the terrified faces

of an American friend and his wife. "What are you doing here?" they inquired anxiously.

"Why, I live here," I replied. "Won't you sit down and have something?"

"Oh, no," the man answered. "We are on our way to the train; we were in the country when the trouble began. It was awful. They arrested us as spies. We only got here this morning. We have seats in the last train for Marseilles and will sail from there."

"Yes," I said, somewhat uninterestedly I fear, "but you have lots of time—sit down."

My friend grasped my shoulder. "Man, are you crazy?" he cried. "You look as if you were going to play tennis. You come along with us to America."

"Can't do it," I replied. "I've got to stay."

They stared at me silently. The woman took my hand.

"Good-by," she whispered.

The man took my hand in both of his. "Good-by," he quavered. "I'll tell them in New York that I saw you."

"Do," I replied.

I was not at all courageous in remaining in Paris. I did not remain because I so desired. I remained because, as a newspaper man appointed



to cover the news of Paris, I could not run away. Then, also, the biggest news that perhaps Paris would ever know seemed so near. I bought a number of American flags that day and hung them outside my windows.

I felt more fortunate than my fellow Americans who had gone away.

## CHAPTER V

### WAR

A NIGHT spent sending despatches—a yelling, singing mob beneath the windows making it almost impossible for messengers to cross to the cable office;—a dawn passed in riding from one ministry to another, wherever any portion of the war councils might still be in session;—and a forenoon spent in a Turkish bath, brought me near to the fateful hour on Saturday, August 1st, when France went to war.

I went to the bath establishment for sleep; but insistently I heard the voices of the night before—the yells, the cheers and the “Marseillaise.” They were just as audible in that Moorish room, with dim lights and a trickling marble fountain. There was no such thing as sleep.

I went to my office and found a sum of gold awaiting me. I was glad to get that gold. I had sent an urgent letter in order to get it, in which I used such phrases as “difficulty of getting cash,” “moratoriums, etc.” My debtor wrote back, “What is a moratorium?” but he sent the

cash. It saved the situation for me during the next month, while the financial stringency lasted. I went over to my bank, The Equitable Trust Company, to deposit it. Mr. Laurence Slade, the manager, was in the hall.

"Is it safe to leave this with you," I asked, "or must I go clinking around town with it hung in a leather belt festooned about my person?"

"Leave it," he suggested.

"But the moratorium?" I inquired.

"Won't take advantage of it with any of our customers and we will keep open unless a shell blows the place up."

I thrust it into his hands, thankful that I had always used an American banking institution in Paris. All French banks took advantage of the moratorium the moment it was declared.

On the boulevards the crowds were thinner than the days before. I stood watching them idly. Every one seemed to realize that the declaration of war was hanging just over our heads. There was less excitement, less feeling of all kind. I said to myself, "Well, it's coming, the greatest story in all the world and there isn't a line to be written." It was just too big to be written then—and except the official bulletins of marching events I know of nothing that was sent to any

newspaper on that day either remarkable from the standpoint of writing or facts.

After idling along the boulevard for a few moments, I decided to go to my usual hunting ground for news—the Embassy. I hailed a taxi, and just as I opened the door on one side to enter, a bearded Frenchman opened the door opposite. I stated that the taxi was mine, and he declared emphatically that it belonged to him. The chauffeur evidently saw us both at the same instant and could not make up his mind as to our respective rights. A crowd began to gather, as the Frenchman, recognizing that I was a foreigner, began haranguing the chauffeur.

“What do you mean?” he cried. “Do you propose to let foreigners have taxis in times like this? Taxis are scarce.”

The crowd began to mutter “foreigner.” In a minute they would have declared that I was a German. But I had an inspiration.

“I want to go to the American Embassy,” I told the Frenchman. “If you are going that direction why not come with me? We can share the cab.”

I have always maintained that a Frenchman, no matter how excited he is—and when he is excited he is often almost impossible—will always

listen to reason if you can get his attention. My proposition was so entirely unusual that immediately he listened, then smiled and stepped into the cab, motioning me to do the same.

"*L'Ambassade Americaine*," he bellowed to the chauffeur, and as we drove away he was accepting a cigar from my case.

He explained both his excitement and his hurry. When the mobilization call came it would be necessary for him to join his regiment on the first day. I wanted to tell the chauffeur to drive to his home first, but he would not allow this, and when we arrived at the Embassy it was actually with difficulty that I forced upon him the payment for the taxi up to that point.

I was soon in the famous private room of conference and confidence. The Ambassador, as usual, was sitting with his face to the open window, and smoking a cigarette.

I placed my hat and stick upon the desk and seated myself in silence. We remained quiet for quite a full minute. Finally Mr. Herrick said, with a short laugh:

"Well, there does not seem anything more to talk about, does there?"

"No," I replied, "we seem to be at that point. There isn't anything even to write about."

A door behind us opened quietly, and Mr. Robert Woods Bliss, the first secretary of the Embassy, entered. He walked to the desk. Neither the Ambassador nor I turned. Mr. Bliss stood silent for a moment, then said quietly:

"It's come."

"Ah," breathed Mr. Herrick.

"Yes," replied Mr. Bliss, "the Foreign Office has just telephoned. The news will be on the streets in a minute."

It was the biggest moment, perhaps, the world will ever know. It was so big that it stunned us all.

I rose and took my hat and stick.

"Well," I ejaculated somewhat uncertainly.

"Well," said the Ambassador in much the same manner.

Then we shook hands; and like a person in a trance I walked out of the room and down to the street.

The isolated Rue de Chaillot was quite deserted; I walked down to the Place de l'Alma to find a cab. There the scene was different. Cabs by the dozen whirled along, but none heeded my signals. A human wave was rolling over the city. Fiacres, street cars, taxis filled with men and baggage were sweeping along. Almost every



vehicle was headed for one or another of the railway stations. Already the extra editions had notified the populace of the state of affairs and mobilization was under way.

Finally an empty fiacre came along and I signaled the driver, jumping aboard at the same moment. Just as an hour earlier when I signaled a cab, a Frenchman stepped in at the opposite side. Only, this time, the Frenchman wasted no words concerning his rights to the carriage.

He bowed. "I go to the Place de l'Opera," he said pleasantly.

I bowed. "I go to exactly the same spot," I replied tactfully.

We sat down and he directed the driver. We remained silent as we drove down the Cours la Reine until we came opposite the Esplanade of the Invalides. The sun was setting behind the golden dome over the tomb of Napoleon. Then my companion spoke:

"I will take the subway at the Opera station and go to my home. It will be the last time. I join my regiment to-morrow."

I looked at him for a moment, then asked curiously: "How do you feel about it? Tell me—are you glad—and are you confident?"

He looked me straight in the eye. "I am glad," he answered. "We are all glad—glad that the waiting and the disappointments, the humiliations of forty-four years, are over."

"And will you win—you think?"

"I do not know, but we will fight well—that is all I can say, and this time we are not fighting alone."

We arrived at the Opera. He jumped to the sidewalk and put out his hand. "Good-by," he said, smiling. "May we meet again." I wrung his hand and watched him dive down the stairs to the subway station.

I remained at the office as the afternoon slipped into evening and evening into night, writing my despatches on the actual outbreak of war. As I sat by the window, I suddenly realized that instead of the dazzling illumination of the boulevards I was gazing into the darkness. I investigated this phenomenon and I wrote another despatch upon the new aspect of the city of Paris on the first night of the war. It was a cable describing the death of the old "Ville Lumière" and the birth of the new French spirit. For not only were the boulevards dark, but the voices of the city were hushed. It began to rain—a gentle, warm, summer rain; the gendarmes put on their

rubber capes and hoods and melted into the shadows.

I went out to take my despatches to the cable office. The streets were quiet as death. A forlorn fiacre ambled dismally out of a gloomy side street, the bell on the horse's neck giving forth a hollow-sounding tinkle. I climbed in. The driver turned immediately off the boulevard into a back street, when suddenly the decrepit horse fell to his haunches in the slippery road. At once I felt, for I could scarcely see, four silent figures surrounding us. The night before I would have scented danger; but now I had a different feeling entirely. The four shadowy figures remained silent, at attention, as the driver hauled the kicking and plunging horse to his feet.

"He thinks of the war," said the driver.

A quiet chuckle came from the quartet, and I could now distinguish that they were gendarmes.

"You travel late," one of them said, addressing me.

"*La presse*," I replied briefly.

"*Bien!*" was the reply. We drove down the dark street, I astonished at this city that had found itself; this nation that had got quietly and determinately to business, at the very signal of conflict, to the amazement of the entire world.

PART TWO  
THE GREATEST STORY











WYTHE WILLIAMS OF THE "NEW YORK TIMES"

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ACTUALITY

ON the sidewalk *terrasse* of a little café a few doors from the American Embassy I was one of a quartet of newspaper men on one of the final afternoons of August, 1914.

War news, thanks to the censor, had lapsed in volume and intensity; but the troubles of refugee Americans still made our cables bulky, and we continued to pass much time at the Embassy or in its vicinity.

A man wobbled wearily down the street on a bicycle. I recognized him as a "special correspondent" who had called on me ten days before, asking advice as to where he should apply for credentials permitting him to describe battles. He later disappeared into the then vague territory known as the "zone of military activity," without any papers authorizing the trip.

He leaned his bicycle against a tree and joined us. He had little to say as to where he had been, but told us that he had been a prisoner of the British army for several days. He mentioned a

town near the Belgian frontier where, as he described the situation, "the entire army came piling in before he had a chance to pile out."

I do not know what made me suspect that Mr. Special Correspondent was then the possessor of big news, for he gave not the slightest suggestion of the direction in which the British army was traveling. But I suspected him. In a few minutes he left us to call on the Ambassador. Later, when I saw him ride away from the Embassy on his bicycle, I sent in my card.

Mr. Herrick was as bland as usual, but there was a worried look on his face. I wasted no time.

"Mr. — called on you this afternoon," I said, naming the special correspondent. "He told you some real news."

"Yes, that is so," the Ambassador replied. "How did you guess it?"

I explained that I only had a suspicion, and the Ambassador continued:

"He cannot cable it, you need not worry. He will not attempt it. He has gone now to write an account for the mail. He told me so that I could make some plans."

"Some plans?" I interrupted. "The news is bad then."

Mr. Herrick eyed me keenly for a moment—then he leaned over his desk and spoke in a whisper. He kept the confidences of the “special correspondent,” but he gave me information that supplemented it, which he had from his own sources. He told me no names—no details—but he gave me the news appearing in the official communiqués three full days later;—that the British had been forced back at Mons—the French defeated at Charleroi, and that the entire Allied line was retreating. I did not learn where the line was. But as I left the Embassy I realized that France was invaded; I realized that the greatest story in the world was at hand. The fear was upon me, although I failed to grasp it entirely, that this was a story which in its entirety would never be written for a newspaper.

Mr. Special Correspondent passed two days in the seclusion of his hotel writing a splendid chapter for which he received high praise, but he was unable to get it printed until several weeks after the entire story had gone into history. Other correspondents were able to write half and quarter chapters which in a few instances received publication while the story was in progress.

I sat at my desk that night pondering on how to cable some inkling of my information to

America. I confess that I almost wished the cable was cut and the loose ends lost on the bottom of the Atlantic.

I studied the map of Europe facing me on the wall. Sending a courier to England was as useless as cabling direct, for the English censor was equally severe as the French. A code message was under censorial ban. A courier aboard the Sud-express might have filed the news from Spain or Portugal but the mobilization plans of General Joffre had arranged that there would be no Sud-express for some time.

There were undoubtedly other correspondents who knew as much concerning the state of affairs as I. Many British correspondents, without credentials, were dodging about the armies, getting into captivity and out again. Several American correspondents were in Belgium following the Germans as best they could. But none of them was at the end of a cable. Had they been they would have been quite as helpless as I. For had I been able that night to use the cable as I desired, I would have beaten the press of the world by three full days with the story of the danger that threatened Paris.

The next night, although I was completely ignorant whether the news was then known in

America, I tried to beat the censor at his own game. I succeeded to the extent of having my despatch passed, but unfortunately it was not understood in the home office of my newspaper. This was my scheme :

During the day rumors of disaster began to spread; but the Paris papers printed nothing of the truth, and officially the Allied armies continued to hold the Belgian frontier. That night refugees from French cities began entering Paris at the Gare du Nord.

I began an innocent despatch that seemed hardly worth the cable tolls. It ambled along, with cumbersome sentences and involved grammar, describing American war charities. Then without what in cable parlance is known as a "full stop," which indicates a complete break in the sense of the reading matter, I inserted the words "refugees crowding gare du nord tonight from points south of Lille," and continued the despatch with more material of the sort with which it began.

I went home hoping for the best and wondering if I had made myself sufficiently clear to arouse the suspicion of the copy reader on the other side of the ocean who handled my copy. If I had I knew that those eleven words would be printed in the largest display type the following morning.



Two weeks later, when the next batch of newspapers reached Paris, I read those words with interest. They were all there, but carefully buried in the story of war charities exactly where I had placed them.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIELD OF GLORY

THE battle of the Marne was fought by the Allies in the direct interest of the city of Paris. The result was the city's salvation. At the time, only a small percentage of the inhabitants knew anything about it. But as all the world knows now, the battlefield of the Marne was the first field of glory for the Allied armies in the great European war. When the war is over, the sight-seeing motors will reach it in two hours, probably starting from the corner of the Avenue de l'Opera and the Rue de la Paix—a street that by now might have a different name had it not been for the thousands who died only a few miles away.

On one of the first days of September, 1914, the few journalists who remained in Paris gathered at the Café Napolitain early in the afternoon, instead of at the *apéritif* hour. The Café Napolitain, around the corner from the sight-seeing motor stand, is the rendezvous for journalists, and always has been. At the *apéritif*

hour—just before dinner—you may see all the best-known figures in the French journalistic world, also the correspondents of the London and New York press, seated on its sidewalk *terrasse*.

I sat on the *terrasse* on that never to be forgotten afternoon of September. We were mostly Englishmen and Americans. The majority of our French confrères were serving in their regiments. Some of them, with whom we had argued only five weeks before concerning the trial of Madame Cailiaux, were now lying on the fields of Charleroi and Mons. Some of the Englishmen had decided, because of the rumored orders of the Kaiser concerning the fate of captured British journalists, that Bordeaux was a better center for news than Paris, and had followed the Government to their new capital, on the anniversary of Sedan. Several of the Americans had also left town, but in order to better follow the movements of the Allied armies. Owing to the vigorous unemotionalism of General Joffre, none of them was any nearer the "field of operations" than we who sat on the *Café terrasse*.

I doubt if ever a world capital presented such a scene, or ever will again, as Paris on that afternoon. The day itself was perfect—glorious summer, not hot—just pleasantly warm. The sun

hung over the city casting straight shadows of the full leaves, down on the tree lined sidewalk. But there was not an automobile, nor carriage, scarcely even a person in the boulevards. The city was completely still. It had seen in the three days previous probably the greatest exodus in the history of the world. The ordinary population had shrunk over a million. The last of the American tourists left that morning for Havre. The railroad communications to the north were in the hands of the German army. There were no telegraph communications. Even the telephone was rigidly restricted. The censor made the sending of cables almost an impossibility. We were in a city detached—apart from the rest of the world.

That morning, at the headquarters of the military government, we were advised to get out quickly—on that same day in fact—or take our own chances by remaining. Possibly all the bridges and roads leading out of the city might be blown up before next morning. Uhlans had been seen in the forest of Montmorency, only ten miles away. It seemed that Paris, which has supplied so much drama to the world's history, was about to add another chapter, and the odds were that it would be a final one.

So, as I have said, I sat with my fellow jour-

nalists on the *terrasse* of the Café Napolitain that fateful afternoon—and waited. That is why we were there—to wait. Several times we thought our waiting was rewarded, and we strained our ears. For we were waiting to hear the guns—the guns of the German attack. Through that entire afternoon, not one of us, singly or in partnership, would have offered ten cents for the city of Paris. We felt in our souls that it was doomed. It was an afternoon to have lived—even though nothing happened.

Toward nightfall we learned that the German forces had suddenly diverted their march to the southeast. We sat on our *terrasse* and wondered. That night every auto-taxi in the city was conveying a portion of General Maunoury's army out of the north gates, to fall on the enemy's right flank. The next morning, bright and early, those of us who were astir, heard very faintly—so faintly we could scarcely believe, but we heard nevertheless, the opening guns of the battle of the Marne.

I know only one journalist who actually saw the battle of the Marne. I know several who said they saw it, but I did not believe them, and I know better than to believe them now. Of course there are French journalists who took a military part in the battle, but they have not yet had opportu-



nity to chronicle their impressions—those of them who live. This one journalist saw the battle as a prisoner with his own army; he was lugged along with them clear to the Aisne.

The week following the German retreat to the Aisne, I was permitted to visit the field of glory. It was only after skilful manoeuvres and great difficulties that I secured a military pass. And then my pass was canceled after I had been out of Paris only three days—and I was sent back under a military escort. But I saw the battlefield before the hand of the restorer reached it.

The trees still lay where they fell, cut down by shells. Broken cannon and aeroplanes were in the ditches and in the fields. Unused German ammunition and food supplies were strewn about, showing where the enemy had been forced to a hasty retreat. Sentries guarded every cross roads. The dead, numbering thousands, lay unburied and dotted the plain as far as the eye could see. It was still the field of glory. It was still wet with blood.

We who took that trip were thrilled by all the silent evidence of the mighty struggle that had taken place there only a few days—only a few hours before. It was easy for us to picture the mammoth combat, the battle of the millions, across



that wonderful, beautifully undulating plain. The war was terrible—true. But it was glorious. The men who died there were heroes. Our emotions were almost too much for us. And in the very near distance the artillery still thundered both night and day.

On the third of February, 1915, five months from the time I sat on the *terrasse* of the Café Napolitain waiting to hear the guns, I travel for a second time over the battlefield of the Marne.

This time I do not have a military pass. It is no longer necessary. The valley of the Marne is no longer in the zone of operations. I go out openly in an automobile. There are no sentries to block the way. The road is perfectly safe; so safe that I take my wife with me to show her some of the devastations of war. She is probably the first of the visitors to pass across that famous battlefield, perhaps soon to be overrun by thousands.

Our car climbs the steep hill beyond Meaux, which is the extreme edge of the battlefield, about ten in the morning; and during the day circuits about half the area of the fighting, a distance of about seventy-five miles—or a hundred miles.

The "Field of Five Thousand Dead" is what

the majority of the tourists will probably call the battlefield of the Marne, because of the tragic toll of life taken on that one particular rolling bit of meadow.

We stop at this field in the morning soon after leaving Meaux. As we look across it we see none of the signs of conflict that I had witnessed in September. There are none of the ruined accouterments of war. No horses lie on their backs, four legs sticking straight in the air. There are no human forms in huddled and grotesque positions in the ravines and on the flat. True, every tree bears the mark of bullets, every wall has been shattered by shells, but these signs are not overpowering evidences of massive conflict. There is nothing to make vivid the fearful charge of the Zouaves against the flower of Von Kluck's army only five months before.

Yes—there is something. As we look more closely we see far away a cluster of little rude black wood crosses. They are not planted on mounds, they just stick up straight from the level ground. There are other little clusters throughout the field. Each cross marks a grave. Each grave contains from a dozen to fifty bodies. Together the crosses mark the total of five thousand dead.

An old woman hobbles along the main road. She looks at us curiously and stops beside the car. I ask if we can go close to the little black crosses. She replies that we can but that the fields are very muddy. I ask if any of the graves are marked with the names of the fallen soldiers. She shakes her head. No, they are the unknown dead. The regiments that fought across that field are known—that is all. There are both French and German dead. The relatives of course know that their men were in those regiments and they may assume, if they have not received letters from them recently, that they have been buried there—out on that vast, undulating, wind swept plain under one of the little black crosses. But, of course, one can never be sure. They might not be dead at all—only prisoners—or again, they might have died somewhere else. It is all very confusing and vague—what happens to the men who no longer send letters home. It is safe to believe they are just dead—to determine where they died is difficult.

The old woman suggests that we visit the little village grave-yard, at the corner of the field. The Zouave officers are buried there—those who were recognized as officers. Some English had also been found and carried there. She is the caretaker

of the little grave-yard. She will show it to us. She says that it is much more interesting than the field. The field is much too muddy.

The world is as still as the death all around us when we enter that little country grave-yard. It has been trampled by a multitude. The five months that have elapsed and the hard work of the little old woman have not destroyed the signs of conflict there. But the time has taken the glory. The low stone wall that surrounds the place has been used as a barricade by the Zouaves. It is pierced with holes for their rifles. In many places portions of the wall are missing, showing where the shells have struck.

In the center of the yard, one of them has opened a grave. It is a child's grave. I look down into the hole about three feet below the muddy surface of the yard. I see a weather-beaten headstone. It bears the child's name. A hundred years, according to date, that stone has silently borne witness of the few years of life before death, and then it has been rudely crushed into the earth on a glorious day in September. The graves of the soldiers who died there that same glorious day are all fresh mounds. There are only twenty or thirty mounds, but five hundred dead are buried beneath them. Above the

mounds are freshly painted crosses. On some of them are roughly printed the names of the fallen officers. On several are wreaths or artificial flowers—beads in the shape of violets and yellow porcelain immortelles. In one corner under a little cross is inscribed the name of an English lieutenant of dragoons—aged twenty. The old caretaker says that his family may take his body to England when the war is over—but, of course, he is not buried in a coffin—just put into the ground on the spot where he was found clutching a fragment of his sword in his hand.

We drive away to the north. On both sides of the road little clusters of black crosses are planted in the fields. Several times we pass great charred patches on the earth. These are the places where the Germans burned their dead before retreating. There are trenches too—trenches and the dead. There are old trenches and new—those made in a few hours while both armies alternately advanced and retreated, and those which the French engineers have made since for use if the Germans again advance.

We are a dozen miles from the river Aisne when our chauffeur stops. If we go nearer we will be in “the zone of operations” where passes are rigidly required—where if one does not pos-



sess a pass one is under rigid suspicion. We do not take the chance of advancing further.

We are in a devastated village. We have passed through many but this one seems worse than the others. The church has been demolished and two-thirds of the houses gutted by shells and fire. The place is almost deserted by the inhabitants. When we halted our car there was not the sound of a living thing. Then a few scarecrow children gathered and examined us curiously. We examine the remnants of the House of God. It has doubtless been used as a fortress. Bloody uniforms are scattered among the tumbled stones. Five bodies are rotting underneath the altar. Our minds have gone morbid by the horror. The chauffeur turns the car about. An old man comes from the ruins of a shop. He asks if we want to buy souvenirs. The word "souvenirs" halts us. We wonder how many thousand will be sold in this village, and in all the villages during the years following the war. I recall that only a few years ago one might buy "authentic souvenirs of the battle of Waterloo." The old man lugs forth a German helmet and the cartridge of a French shell—one of the famous "seventy-fives." He asks if we are Americans. Then he places a value of five dollars on the helmet and



one dollar for the cartridge. We think that the thrifty inhabitants of these villages may yet triumph over the devastation of war if they lay in sufficient stock of souvenirs. Our chauffeur informs us that we can pick up all we desire in the fields, and we take to the road again.

We stop the car beside a large open meadow a few miles south. The field contains the same clusters of crosses. Part of it is plowed ground and is soggy from the rains. We stumble along it, mud to our shoe tops. We stop beside the crosses. They do not mark all the graves. I suddenly feel my feet sink in the mud. I hastily free myself. My wife asks me what is the matter, and I rush away further into the field. I have accidentally stepped into a grave—the mud being so soft—and have felt my boot touch something. As I looked down I saw a couple of inches of smeared, muddy, gray cloth.

We leave the plowed ground and come into a field of stubble. We stand silent a moment at the top of a knoll. The short winter day is dying rapidly. The horizon for the moment seems lost in cold blue vapors. It seems appropriate to the place—it is like battle smoke.

I stoop over to pick up a shrapnel ball imbedded in the mud. My wife seizes me by the arm. “Lis-

ten," she whispers. The gloom of dusk is creeping about us. "Did you hear?" she asks. Then we hear. "Boom, boo-o-m, boom, boo-o-om." It is quite as faint as the opening sounds of the battle of the Marne to the early risers in Paris. But it is quite as distinct. We have just heard the guns which are still disputing the possession of the Aisne.

The chauffeur is signaling to us. The wind sweeps over the desolate field with a few drops of rain. We make a detour near a haystack. Close to the base—almost under it, I pick up torn strips of gray uniform. They are covered with blood. There is also a battered brass belt buckle, and a bent canteen—evidence of the ghastly and lonely tragedy enacted there. A few feet away looms through the dark the usual black wood cross of the field of glory.

The chauffeur has lighted the lamps on the car. We hear the sound of the engine as we hasten through the mud. We are surfeited with devastation, with horror, and with the field of glory. We tell him to hasten toward Meaux where we will take the next train for Paris. He drives us swiftly into the coming night over the hill that looks upon the "Field of Five Thousand Dead." There we stop a moment to see the last struggles

of the descending sun tipping the forests on the horizon with rosy flames.

We return by a different road through another devastated village. It is not really a village—just a large farmstead—a model farm it was called before the war. Now the stone walls have crumbled. The buildings are twisted skeletons of iron bars—all that withstood the appetite of the flames. Their outlines are vivid black against the sky. They seem to writhe in the wind.

A man and a woman and little girl stand in the road. The car stops and we get out. The man is the owner of the ruin. The woman and child are his wife and daughter. They had fled when the Germans approached. After the glorious victory they returned to their home. The woman asks us to enter the broken gateway. At one end of the walled yard was the house. A broken portion of it remains. The man had boarded up the holes and the cracks in the walls and the empty window frames. He explains that the place had been taken and retaken four times before the French were finally victorious. He tells us of the toll that death had taken in the yard. The woman tells of bodies found in the house—so many in the parlor—so many in the bedroom—so many lying on the stairs.

We walked back to the road where the side lamps of the car cast flickering flames into the night. The chauffeur turns on the electric head lamps that throw a blinding light fifty feet away. The little girl dances in front of them and across the road to a mound of mud. She laughs. Her mother asks her why she is happy. "Oh, the lights," she calls back. "It's like Christmas—and folks are here." She picks up a stone and throws it toward the mound of mud. I noticed that the mound is regular in form—and oblong, about a dozen by six feet in size. Around it runs a border of flat stones. They are set on the corners and arranged in angular criss-cross lines such as a child builds with his toy wooden blocks. We watch the little girl as she kicks one of the stones loose. Her mother calls to her and she hastily puts it back in position. A tall tree casts a shadow across the center of the mound. Through the top of the tree the rising wind begins to sob, and the rain drops blow into our faces. The mother again calls to the child, who comes back across the road stubbing her toes into the mud.

The chauffeur starts the engine and turns the front of the car so that the headlights are direct on the mound, with its border of stones arranged like toy blocks. The shadow of the tall tree points

in another direction. Where it had been—where I could not see before—I now see a black wooden cross. “How many under that?” I asked the man casually. “Eighteen or twenty-two,” he answers, “I forget. We found them here in the road.”

We jump into the car and leave the field of glory in the dark.

PART THREE  
THE ARM OF MILITARY AUTHORITY







RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE  
MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE

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PERMIS  
DE CORRESPONDANT DE PRESSE  
AUX ARMÉES

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JOURNAL

*New. York Times*

CORRESPONDANT

*Wythe Williams*

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Ce permis doit être retourné au Bureau de la Presse  
du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères à la fin de chaque  
tournée.

THE AUTHOR'S PASS

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIELD OF BATTLE

“To see the damage done by the Germans in unfortified villages.”

This was the quest that first passed me into the zone of military operations, that first landed me on the field of battle, and gave me my first experience under fire.

Ambassador Herrick had procured a pass for me and two other Paris correspondents; it covered also an automobile and chauffeur, and was signed by General Galliéni, the Military Governor and Commander of the Army of Paris. Mr. Herrick explained that he had requested it, because we had not attempted to leave the city without credentials—as had many correspondents—“by the back door,” as he said. He considered that it was time for some of us to go out openly “by the front door,” in order to later tell the truth to America.

We took the pass thankfully. It was good for a week and would take us “anywhere on the field

of battle." We have always been thankful that this pass was handed to us by Ambassador Her-  
rick in his private room at the American Embassy,  
and that it was requested of General Galliéni by  
the Ambassador himself—that it was his idea and  
not ours. For later it developed that a pass from  
General Galliéni was not sufficient to take us "any-  
where on the field of battle"—the pass itself dis-  
appeared and we came back to Paris as prisoners  
of war. We were told that we were arrested  
because we were "at the front without creden-  
tials." Our defense was clear, because, we  
argued, when an ambassador asks for something,  
a record of that request exists. Ambassador Her-  
rick made a similar declaration, and we were not  
only released but "expressions of regret" for our  
"detention" were tendered us.

We rented a car and a French chauffeur. We  
wore rough clothes and heavy overcoats, we took  
extra socks, collars, soap, shaving utensils and  
candles. As food we took sardines, salmon, cocoa,  
biscuits, coffee, sausage, bread, bottles of wine  
and water. We also bought an alcohol lamp,  
aluminum plates, collapsible drinking cups and  
jack-knives. At four o'clock that afternoon we  
started.



In retrospect I divide the ensuing days into two parts, and in the latter part I believe that the high water mark of my existence was reached—at least the high tide from the standpoint of new sensations, excitement, and genuine thrills. To digress for an instant, I have somewhere read the account of a person, a well-known novelist, who visited the French trenches months after the period I shall describe; when he got away from his censor and was safe back in America, he reported that no correspondents have really seen anything in this war—and that many of their stories are fakes. Some correspondents, including this one, have not seen much. Some stories have been fakes, including the one which he told. I wish it were permissible to enumerate some of the fakes in detail—but I wish for the sake of this person that he had been along in either the second or the first portions of that trip;—when, just a few miles outside Paris, we first heard the Sentries in the Dark—when, the next morning we met the first batch of Wounded Who Could Walk—and later, when we ate luncheon to an orchestra of bursting shells, a luncheon ordered quietly—to be eaten quietly, during a Lull in the Bombardment.



## (A) SENTRIES IN THE DARK

The car whizzed down the straight country road. We were trying to make night quarters thirty kilometers away. The dusk was already upon us—and the rain. Every night for a week the rain had come at dusk. We were well behind the battle lines, but the Germans had held that countryside only a few days before. Many of them still lurked in the dense woods. At dusk they were apt to shoot at passing motors. If they killed the occupants, they secured clothes and credentials and attempted cutting through to their own lines. The night before, a French general had been killed on the road we were passing. Therefore it was not well to be abroad at dusk, too far northward on the battlefield of the Aisne. But we had cast a tire and lost considerable time. It was necessary to go forward or strike back toward Paris. To remain in the open held an additional risk of being stopped by a British patrol—we were near their lines—and the British were not so polite as the French about requisitioning big touring cars. Our credentials were French.

So we dipped into the night down a long road that ran between solid shadows of towering trees,

behind which ran the continuous hedge of the French countryside, making an ideal hiding place for enemies. The rain increased and so did the cold. Our French driver struggled into an ulster and we crouched low in the body of the limousine, watching the whirling road revealed by our powerful headlights fifty yards in front of the car.

Suddenly came a sharp cry. The chauffeur crashed on the brakes and the car slid to a standstill. I knew that cry from many a novel I had read, but I had never actually heard it before. It was the famous "Qui vive" or "Who goes there?" of the French army. We sat waiting. We saw no one. The rain poured down.

The cry was repeated. A soldier stepped into the road and stood in the light of our lamps about thirty feet away. His rifle was half thrown across his arm and half aimed towards us. He was a tall, handsome chap wearing a long coat buttoned back at the bottom away from his muddy boots. His cap was jammed carelessly over one eye. He bent forward and peered at us under our lights, which half blinded him. Then we saw two dusky shadows at either side of the car. We caught the steel flash of bayonets turned toward us.

The chauffeur saw them too, for he cried out nervously, "Non, non!" The soldier in the road

ignored him. In the dramatic language of France his "*Avancez—donnez le mot de la nuit*" sounded far more impressive than the English equivalent about advancing to give the countersign. He spoke the words simply, a little monotonously, with an air of having done it many times during his period of watch. Then he bent lower and peered more intently under the lights, brushing one arm across his face as though the pelting rain also interfered with his business of seeing in the night.

The chauffeur stated that we carried the signed pass of General Galliéni. If we had mentioned the Mayor of Chicago we would not have made less impression. The ghostly sentries at the sides of the car did not budge. The patrol in the center of the road in the same almost monotone announced that one of us would descend. One would be sufficient. The others might keep the shelter of the car. But he would see these credentials from General X——. If to him they did not appear in order, our fate was a matter within his discretion. We were traveling an important highway and his orders were definite. So the member of our party who carried the important slip of paper descended.

The sentry in the road moved further into the

light. As he read the pass he sheltered it from the rain under the cape of his coat. The guards at the sides of the car remained as though built in position. Then the leader handed back the paper and brought his hand to salute. The others immediately broke their pose; moved into the light and likewise saluted. The tension relieved, we all felt friendly. As we started forward I held a newspaper out of the window and three hands grasped it simultaneously. We had hundreds of newspapers, for some one had told us how welcome they would be at the front.

At an intersection of roads a couple of miles further on, the rain was pelting down so fiercely that we did not clearly hear the "qui vive." The chauffeur desperately called out not to shoot as a file of soldiers suddenly swung across the road with rifles leveled. On their leader we then tried an experiment which we afterwards followed religiously. We handed over a newspaper with our pass. To our surprise he turned first to the government war communiqué on the first page and read it through, grunting his satisfaction meanwhile, before he even glanced at the document which held our fate and on which the rain was making great inky smears. Then he saluted and we drove on rapidly—everybody smiling.

The road then led up an incline through a small village that was filled with soldiers. A patrol halted us as usual and informed us that there was no hotel within another five miles, and possibly even that hotel might be closed. At this news our excitable chauffeur immediately killed his engine and the car started slipping backward down the incline. Fifty soldiers leaped forward and held it while the brakes were applied. We distributed a score of newspapers and as many cigarettes before we could get under way.

We passed no more patrols, but when our lights finally picked out the first signs of the next village they also brought into bold relief a pile of masonry completely blocking the road. We stopped. A villager loomed out of the dark at the side of the car and informed us that the road was barred because the bridge just beyond had been blown up and that we could not pass over the pontoon until morning. The inn, he said, had never been closed nor was its stock of tobacco yet exhausted. He offered to conduct us, and when the innkeeper—a very fat innkeeper—looked over our credentials from General Galliéni he insisted that certain guests should double up, in order to make room for us in the crowded place. He then called his wife, his daughter, his father and his

father's wife, that they might be permitted the honor of shaking us by the hand, as he held aloft the candle, the flame of which flickered down the ancient stone corridor that led to our rooms.

### (B) THE WOUNDED WHO COULD WALK

We were crossing a battlefield four days old. It was remarkable how much it resembled the ordinary kind of field. The French had conquered quickly at this point and the dead had been buried. Except for frequent mounds of earth headed by sticks forming crosses; except for the marks of shrapnel in the roads and on the trees; except for the absence of every living thing, this countryside was at peace. The sun was shining. The frost had brought out flaming tints on the hills. It was glorious Indian summer.

The road we were motoring wound far away through the battlefield. For the armies had fought over a front of many miles. We traveled slowly. As we topped a rise and searched the valley below with our glasses, a mile away in the cup of the valley we saw a moving mass. It filled the roadway from hedge to hedge and appeared to be approaching us. We drove more slowly, stopping several times. The movement of the car made the glasses quiver and blur. We



saw that the moving mass stretched back a considerable distance—perhaps the length of a city block. We stopped our engine and waited in the center of the road.

As the mass came nearer it outlined itself into men. We saw that they were soldiers; but we could not distinguish the uniform. So we waited. We even got our papers ready to show if necessary. Then we saw that the soldiers were not of the same regiment—that their uniforms were conglomerate. We saw the misfits of the French line regiments, the gay trappings of the Spahis and Chasseurs d'Afrique, the skirt trousers of the Zouaves, Turcos and Senegalese, the khaki of the English Tommies and the turbans of the Hindoos. But all these men in the varied costumes of the army of the Allies wore one common mark—a bandage. Arm or head or face was wrapped in white cloths, usually stained with blood. For these on whom we waited were the wounded who could walk. They were going from the battle trenches to somewhere in the rear.

The front rank glanced wonderingly at the big motor that blocked the center of the road and moved aside in either direction. Those behind did likewise, until there was a lane for the car to pass. But we waited. As the front rank came

level with us, a dust-caked British Tommy, with a bloody bandage over one eye, winked his good one at us and touched his cap in salute. We took our hats off as the tragic crowd surrounded us. Tommy sat down on our running board and I handed him a cigarette.

The cigarette established cordial relations at once. Tommy's lean face was browned by the sun and streaked with dirt. About the bandage which encircled his head and crossed his right eye were cakes of dirt and clots of blood. His hair where his cap was pushed back was sand color and crinkly. The eye that turned up to me was pale blue and the skin just about it was white and blue veined.

"Is this Frawnce or is it Belgium?" he asked me. At my answer he squirmed around on the running board, calling to a companion in khaki just coming up—his arm in a sling—" 'Ee says it's Frawnce." The other nodded indifferently and saluted us.

I asked the man about the battle, but he only stared. His friend on the running board turned his eye upward and said, "It's 'ell, that's wot it is." I replied that my question had to do with the course of the battle—which side was winning; and he too only stared at that. Then he arose and

plodded on and I gave a cigarette to his companion.

A score of men stood about the front of the car where the chauffeur was busy handing out apples and pears. My companions were busy on the opposite side with a dozen French infantrymen, telling the latest news from Paris and giving out newspapers. I leaned over them, the box of cigarettes still in my hand. A tall Senegalese standing back from the group caught sight of the box and called out, "Cigarette, eh!" I motioned him to my side of the car. He came running weakly, followed at once by fifty others. I handed out until that box and several others that I dug from my valise were exhausted. I called several times that I had no more, but still they crowded about, stretching out their arms and crying, "Cigarette, eh?" One of my companions warned me that we might ourselves feel the want of tobacco—that money would not buy it in the country we were traversing, because it did not exist.

We still had a box of cigars and I had several loose in my pocket. The black face of a Turco appeared at the car window. One arm was in a sling and a bandage was wound about his brow. But his eyes shone brightly at the thought of tobacco, and at the smell of it now arising on all

sides. He was tobacco hungry. He was more than that. He was tobacco starving. He poked his other arm into the car. I motioned him to crowd his entire bulk into the window so that the others would not see. Then I gave him a cigar. He hung over the car frame as I held out the lighted tip of my own cigar. He puffed a cloud into the interior. He looked at the cigar fondly and seemed to measure its length. It was a good cigar. If it had been a miserable cheroot his regard would have been the same. He took another puff, and drew a complete mouthful into his lungs. His cheeks bulged and his eyes glinted inwards as though he looked at the tip of his nose. I wondered how long he could keep that huge mouthful of smoke within him. Again he held the cigar close to his eyes and seemed to measure its length. It burned perfectly round and the ash was white and solid. Finally he poured forth the smoke from nose and mouth and ejaculated the only English word he knew—"good." I nodded and asked in French where he had been fighting. He cocked his head toward the fore part of the car and took another puff. I asked him where he had been wounded and he replied that he did not know but that it occurred in the trenches "là bas." I asked him how long he had been fighting

in France—how long since he had left Africa, and he spread his arm far out to indicate that the time had been long. I asked him where he was going; he rolled his eyes to the rear of the car and said he did not know.

I sank back in my seat and he climbed down into the road. Most of the troop had limped off. To the few still lingering we indicated that our stock of things to give away was exhausted. They eyed us wistfully, then passed on.

The chauffeur asked if he should start the car, but some one said, "No, let's wait until they all pass." The rear guard straggled up; many were ready to drop with fatigue and pain and loss of blood. I asked a Britisher how long they had been on the road. He replied "since sunrise" and plodded stolidly on. It was then noon. Several sank down for moments under the trees by the roadside. A chasseur stopped and asked our chauffeur to tighten a thong of his bandage, which was stained with fresh blood. We asked him where they were going and he replied vaguely, "To the rear." "And what then?" one of us asked. "Oh! I hope we will all be fighting again soon," he replied. They were all like that. They wanted to be fighting again soon. They were not happy. They were not unhappy. They were

indifferent; more or less, made so by utter fatigue and the pain of their wounds. But they all wanted to be fighting again soon.

We watched them top the rise of the hill to disappear down the long road "to the rear." The last straggler, his head bound with white and red, vanished. They were all privates—all common men of all the world from Scotland to Hindustan. The majority were coming from and going they knew not where, and wanting to fight again for they knew not what—except possibly the men of France, who began to hear about this war in their cradles.

We cranked up the car.

### (C) A LULL IN THE BOMBARDMENT

The sentry just outside the town advised us to right about face and travel the other direction. But he only advised us. Our credentials appeared in order and he did not feel that he could issue a command on the subject. In fact our credentials were very much in order. The sentry saluted us most respectfully; but his advice was wasted. We argued to ourselves that if we went to "the front" we must take a few chances.

So we entered Soissons—one of the most beautiful and historic towns in Northern France. It



has now become even more historic; but its beauty has changed from the crumbling medieval. It is a ruin—more—a remnant of the Great War.

We did not notice this so much as we rode down the winding road to the outskirts. We did notice the unusual fall of autumn foliage. We commented on the early season; the preceding night had been frosty, following rain. Then we noticed many branches lying across the road. Many trees were chipped as with an ax, but the chipped places were high up—out of reach. We wondered why the trees were chipped so high. Then we skirted a great hole in the center of the road. A tree further on was cut off close to the ground. The truth came to us. The fallen leaves and the chipped places were the work of bullets—a multitude of bullets. The hole in the road and the fallen tree were the results of shells.

We saw horses lying in the fields. Their legs stuck rigidly into the air. Horses were lying along the roadside. Insects were crawling over them. Fallen trees lined the way into the town.

We turned into the main street and rattled over its cobblestones. We met no one. Crossing an open square we saw that over half the trees were down. Up a side street a house had fallen forward from its foundations and settled in a

crumbled heap in the center of the road. The sun which had been shining brightly went behind a cloud. We stopped for a moment. We could hear the wind sighing in the tops of the remaining trees. Some one asked, "Is this Sunday?" and was answered, "No. It's Friday. Why?" He replied, "Because it is so still. Did you ever see a place where people live that is so completely silent?" "It reminds me of London on Good Friday—everybody gone to church," said another.

We drove on. A block along the main street a soldier in the French uniform of the line lounged in a doorway. His long blue overcoat flapped desolately over his baggy red trousers. His rifle leaned in the corner. We asked if any hotel remained open. He replied, "I don't know. Have you a cigarette?" I drew out a box and he ran to the car, seizing it as a hungry animal snatches food. He settled back into his doorway, smiling; then said in French argot which translated into American best reads: "Do you guys know you ain't safe here?" We smiled and waited explanation. But he merely shrugged his shoulders. We started the car.

More French soldiers lounged in doorways. Once we saw the white and frightened face of a woman peering at us from a window. She was

entirely incurious. Her gaze was dispassionate. She appeared to have not the slightest interest either in us or our big car, which surely was a rare sight in the streets of that town on that day. But the fright upon her face was stamped.

Several villagers stood at the next corner. They exhibited interest. We again asked about a hotel and one pointed to a building we had just passed. We noted that its doors and windows were barred; but we thought they might open up.

We asked, then, when the firing on the town had ceased. The man laughed. Anything so normal as a laugh seemed out of place in that ghastly silence. It grated. But it seemed that after all one might observe the function of laughing even during war. He informed us that the German gunners were probably at lunch. We asked the position of the French batteries, and as he pointed vaguely toward the south we realized that we were then in an advance position on the firing line—that the force of soldiers was only an outpost. The same man told us that the town had been under fire for eight days, that the French had shifted the position of their heavy guns and that the Germans were now trying to locate them. We returned to the hotel, stabled our automobile and ordered luncheon, which the landlord informed

us would be ready in half an hour. So we continued the exploration of the town on foot.

The chauffeur did not accompany us, for there was a captured German automobile in the barn that interested him greatly. Under the seat he found the army papers of the German driver. He advised us not to touch them. They were dangerous. If found in our possession we might be arrested as spies. So we dropped them back under the seat, and went out into the market place.

As is usual in small French cities the market consisted of a large building entirely open at the ends and fronting on a large square paved with cobbles. We walked into the building; it was deserted and our footsteps echoed. In the center was a pile of masonry, beneath a large hole in the roof torn by a shell. The explosion had cracked the side walls. In one of the cracks was jammed the top of a meat table, forcibly caught up from the floor and hurled there. A little further on a shell had passed through both side walls, leaving clean holes large enough for a man to stand.

I stood in one of them and saw where the shell had spent its force on a residence across the square. It had caught the house plumb on a corner and at the floor of the second story, so that the floor sagged down into the room below. The

room above had been a bedchamber. The entire side wall was gone, so all that remained of the intimacies of the room were exposed. The bed with the covers thrown back as though the occupant quitted it hurriedly had slipped forward until stopped by a broken bit of the wall. From another jagged piece of masonry that formed part of the wall the blue skirt of a child flapped desolately over the sidewalk. We left the market building and stood in the center of the square looking down the six streets that emptied into it. They were narrow, winding streets, and we could not see far. But in all we could see the ruin—the crumbled masonry and walls blackened by fire.

We looked at our watches and hurried toward the hotel. Entering the street, about half a block distant, we stopped to look down a side alley. As we looked we heard what seemed to be a shrill whistle, pitched high and very prolonged. It seemed like the shriek of a suddenly rising wind; but it was followed by a dull boom and the crash of falling masonry. We looked behind us and saw clouds of smoke and dust rising a short distance beyond the market place. We ran toward the hotel. At the entrance we again heard the high-pitched screaming whistle, ending in a crash much more acute. “That struck nearer,” one of us



observed. But we did not wait to see. As we entered the hall, the landlord remarked, "*Ça commence encore.*"

We filed into the dining room in time to see him carefully place the soup upon the table.



## CHAPTER IX

### “DETAINED” BY THE COLONEL

WE had just passed a sentry on the outskirts of a village. He had brought his rifle to an imposing salute as he read the name upon our military credentials. One of my companions, smiling fatuously, remarked:

“Well, fellows, this is a real pass. It gets us anywhere.”

At that very instant the Colonel leaped on the running board of our automobile.

He too was smiling, but not fatuously. Although he was French he was sufficiently an Anglophile to affect a monocle, and this gave a chilling, glassy effect to his smile.

“Your pass!” he said, stretching out his hand, at the same time signaling the chauffeur to stop. The pass was given him, one of us explaining that we had just shown it to a sentry, who had permitted us to enter the town.

“Ah, quite so,” he murmured. He carefully read the pass, screwing his monocle into his eye.

"Ah, *quite* so. But you will please follow me." He signaled us to get out of the car and directed the chauffeur to turn to the side of the road and to remain there. Then he led the way down a narrow lane. At the door of a small house he told us to wait. He left the door open and we saw him pass down the hall and into a rear room. Then came a burst of laughter.

"More '*journalistes Américains*,'" we heard; and then another peal of merriment. We stood about the doorstep and wondered.

The Colonel reappeared and again directed us to follow. This time he led the way to a barn a short distance along the road. A cow yard surrounded the barn, enclosed by a high stone wall. At the gate stood a soldier with fixed bayonet. On the gate-post was written a single word.

I had been suspecting for several minutes that a hitch had occurred in our plans for going war-corresponding. My companions had similar ideas, but we had kept silent. Now, as we stared at this word written on the wall, I turned to the chap who had spoken so confidently about our pass.

"You were right about the pass," I said. "It gets us anywhere."

For the word written on the wall was "Prison."

The Colonel stopped at the gate of the cow yard, twirled his mustache, and screwed his monocle. He bowed. We bowed. Then we preceded him through the gate.

A derisive yell greeted us from a quartet seated on a wooden bench outside the door of the barn. The quartet arose and came towards us laughing.

"You know these men?" asked the Colonel.

Oh, yes, we knew them. They too were newspaper men, at least three of them. Two represented Italian papers, one an Amsterdam journal. The fourth was an Italian nobleman whose name was frequently in the social columns because of his dinners at the Ritz and Armenonville. He explained that he had accompanied the others as their gentleman chauffeur, driving his own big car. It had been requisitioned for the army at the same moment they themselves were escorted into the cow yard three days before. The Colonel stood by during our greetings, still twirling his mustache. He addressed the quartet.

"Since you know these men," he said, indicating us, "you will please explain to them where they will sleep and the arrangements for food."

Then he turned to us, at the same time pointing to a corner of the building nearest the wall gate. He said:

"You are permitted to remain out of doors as much as you like, but you are not to pass that corner. If you do—well—" a shrug and the monocled smile, "the soldier at the gate will probably shoot."

The sage of our party became sarcastic.

"I presume that the soldier's gun is loaded," he remarked.

"Oh, yes," the Colonel still smiled. "The gun is always ready—also the bayonet—it would be regrettable—" again he shrugged his shoulders.

"But why are we prisoners," the sage one demanded, "and where is our pass? If we cannot go on we will go back to Paris. What right have you to keep us here?"

The Colonel raised his eyebrows and spread out his hands. His tones were so polite as to be almost apologetic.

"Right?" he questioned. "My dear fellow, it is simply a question of the *force majeure*. And besides you are not prisoners."

"Not prisoners?" we shouted in unison. "If we are not prisoners, then what are we?"

"You are not prisoners," the Colonel insisted. "You are simply detained. You can neither go forward nor back until I receive further instructions concerning you. For the moment you are my guests."

He bowed politely and gracefully.

"And the soldier with the rifle? And the dead line at the corner of the building?"

"Ah, quite so—quite so," murmured the Colonel; then bowed again to us and went out the gate.

"Consequential little cuss," sputtered one of our trio.

"Better play up to him," advised one of the Italians. "We have been here three days. Come see where we sleep—"

They led the way to a stone outhouse near one end of the stable. A soldier with loaded rifle sat in the door. We peered within. Two cow stalls heaped with filthy straw. One of the stalls was empty; in the other we could dimly discern some huddled forms.

"We sleep in the empty one," our confrères informed us. "You will sleep there too."

"And those in the other stall?" I asked.

"Oh, those! They are German spies captured during the day. They take them out every morn-

ing—they don't come back—fresh ones take their places."

I shuddered. "What becomes of them?" No one answered and the other Italian said: "Don't talk about such things. We too are prisoners, you know."

"Oh, no," said some one. "We are not prisoners—we are merely detained—guests of the Colonel."

That evening the Colonel clattered into the yard on horseback. About twenty of his men were loafing about. On his appearance there was a great to-do. They sprang stiffly to attention in lines on either side of the horse. I learned later that this was the regular evening ceremony when the Colonel returned from his ride. I had to admit that he cut a fine figure on a horse. His body was slender and very straight. His hair slightly grizzled, his face grim, but with always that glassy, haughty smile. He wore high boots of the finest leather. His spurs jingled. His uniform was immaculate. His cape swung jauntily over one shoulder. His sword clanged. His medals were resplendent. His head was held high as he rigidly returned the salutes. At every moment I expected to hear the orchestra's opening bars, and the Colonel proclaim in a fine baritone, "Oh, the Colonel of the regiment



am I," with the soldier chorus echoing, "the Colonel of the regiment is he."

However, the Colonel dismounted into very real pools of mud and manure.

"*Lés correspondants Américains!*" he shouted.

We lined up—hopefully—before him.

"Your automobile," he informed us curtly, "has become the property of the army. I have directed that your overcoats and other belongings, and the food you carry with you, be brought to you here. You may eat this food and also draw your daily ration of the army fare."

This was a concession; and one of the Italians, who had drawn near, immediately asked for another.

"Now that there are seven of us," he asked "can't we have an audience with the commanding general of this division?"

The Colonel considered, then said: "If you ask an audience for only one of your number, you may draw up a petition."

The Italian, having made the suggestion, wrote the petition, we all signed it and an hour later he was led away between files of soldiers to see the General. Returning, after only a few minutes, he said the General had received him courteously but

would give him no satisfaction, saying that he was waiting for instructions concerning us from General Joffre.

There was nothing to do then but make the best of it.

At six o'clock the Colonel's cook informed us that we could go to the great open oven in the cow yard and draw our evening rations. It was lucky that we had our aluminum plates, for there were no others for us. We filed across the yard with the soldiers and got a mixture of beans and beef that was decidedly unpalatable even though we flavored it with our own wine and bread. As we finished it, our chauffeur, a trench "reformé," appeared in the kitchen. He told us he was not a prisoner but was "detained" in the town with the car. He asked for a bottle of our wine, which we gave him, with a cake of chocolate, and a bottle of our water.

My two friends and myself then discussed our sleeping problem. We had resolved not to sleep in that outhouse with the Germans. When the Colonel next came into the yard we tackled him, asking if we might not have the freedom of the town under parole, in order to find beds.

He said he could not consider it.

“Then,” said our spokesman, “rather than sleep in the outhouse may we stay here in the yard?”

The Colonel stiffened with sudden resentment at our making so many difficulties. He strode fiercely to a door of the stable and threw it open, showing piles of straw on the earthen floor.

“There I sleep with my officers,” he said with dignified reproach.

“But,” we explained, “it is not the hardship to which we object. We do not wish to be classified and kept in the same place with German spies.”

“Ah,” said the Colonel. He stared a moment, then smiled. He was human after all. He could appreciate that point and liked us the better for making it.

He said we might stay in the yard and then, after stamping about the room a few minutes, he pointed to a ladder to a loft above his quarters and said:

“You may use that place if you like. It is not occupied. The others can sleep there too if they like.”

We quickly scaled the ladder and discovered a large, bare room that had evidently been used as a granary, for there were piles of grain and

some farm implements lying about. A small window, which the Colonel had evidently overlooked, opened on to the street and also a great door on the courtyard.

At eight o'clock we stumbled up into our loft, lighted a candle and fixed up our beds. We had bought some straw for two francs, from a farmer one of the soldiers found for us. The beds were hard and uncomfortable. Naturally we slept in all our clothes and with our coats over us also; but by morning we were chilled through, for the wind howled through all the cracks, and several panes of glass in the window were broken. So at least we had fresh air.

All through the previous afternoon we had heard the constant booming of heavy artillery, which the Colonel said was about twelve miles away, and was the bombardment of Rheims, which he very openly stated was then in process of destruction, chiefly by fire. At four in the morning this cannonade again started, waking us up. We rose and descended to the yard followed by the sleepy Italian quartet. We found the Colonel, very wide awake, spick and span. He fixed the Italians with his monocle.

"I understand that one of them is a prince," he said. "Tell me which one."

We pointed out the nobleman, who was the smallest and the most dispirited of the lot.

The Colonel grunted:

“A prince, eh? Well, I like his automobile quite well.”

That day we got another bench to sit on and a box that we transformed into a dining table. With some candles we rigged up a lantern. For a table-cloth we had some old canvas maps. These were furnished by the Colonel himself. In fact after we once got behind that monocle we came to like our Colonel immensely. It was plain that he liked “*les Américains*” better than the others. Although he could not officially recognize all that we did, it was understood that we were permitted to bribe his cook. So we had real coffee for breakfast. We had vegetables not included in the army menu; and on one great occasion we secured enough apples and pears to make a magnificent compote in our little alcohol stove.

We got up the second morning about 6.30, greatly discouraged, although the Colonel’s cook, to whom we had given twenty francs the night before, brought us coffee. There was no water to be had until the soldiers had finished at the pump, and we did not have moral courage enough

to shave or wash anyhow; we just stood around the courtyard in a drizzle of rain, cursing everything and everybody, chiefly our captors. We argued over and over again that it was ridiculous to arrest us; if our pass was no longer valid the thing to do was to send us back to Paris, under guard if necessary.

That morning one of the Italians dropped a letter out of the window of our loft opening on the street, to a soldier, who said he would post it in Paris. It was addressed to the "Gaulois" and contained a note from us to the American Ambassador, which I learned later never saw its destination. The first news of our whereabouts reached Paris in a message that our chauffeur sent by hand to the automobile company, merely saying that the car had been requisitioned; and we did not know about this until we returned to Paris.

We also drafted a long letter to the Commanding General, asking to send an enclosed telegram to Ambassador Herrick. The telegram stated that the three of us were detained at that point, and asked him to notify our offices in Paris. The Colonel took this letter and said he would deliver it to the General; but the telegram enclosed never reached Paris.



At five o'clock the third morning we were awakened by a soldier coming into the loft and waving a lantern over us as we lay on the floor. He called out the names of the quartet and told them to follow him. They did so, and that was the last we saw of them. I confess it gave us rather an extra chill, even though we were all chilled to the bone from the weather, to see them led out in that fashion and at that ghastly hour. It was still very dark. We heard them clatter out into the courtyard. I peered out of the loft door and dimly saw a file of soldiers. I heard one of our late companions complaining about the loss of his hat.

At breakfast our fears were set at rest by the Colonel explaining that as the quartet had been arrested before us their case had been settled first, and that they had been taken to Paris. He had found the missing hat, which he gave to me, and asked anxiously whether I would search out the owner when I returned to Paris. Inasmuch as this was some indication that I really might see Paris again, I gladly promised.

The weather cleared and we passed considerable time in the yard. A small enclosed orchard lay adjoining the courtyard, and one afternoon the

Colonel gave us permission to walk there. We found some wild flowers and put them in our buttonholes. This touch of elegance called forth the admiration of the Colonel when we again saw him.

*"C'est comme à Paris,"* he said.

We even got up enough courage to shave and scrape the mud off our clothes and boots, and clean up generally as well as we could. We had given the cook another twenty francs and he heated some water for us.

At noon the next day the Colonel told us that arrangements had been made for us to return to Paris at three o'clock and in our own automobile; inasmuch as his soldiers did not like it, it was to be turned over to the authorities in Paris. He asked us what had become of our French chauffeur. We insisted that no one could know less about this than we; and a detail of soldiers was sent out to rake the town for him. After the midday meal we noticed that the guard at the gate had been withdrawn, so we suggested that perhaps we could pass our "dead line" and look out at the world. As we reached the gate four men in civilian dress accompanied by a soldier entered. The soldiers in the cow yard and ourselves burst into a mighty laugh. "More Ameri-

can correspondents," was the shout that greeted the newcomers.

Two of them were special correspondents for American and English papers, one was a "famous war correspondent," the fourth was an amateur journalist whose claim to war corresponding lay in his former experience as an officer in the New York militia. Also he was the relative of a wealthy politician.

No credentials were found on the person of any one of the quartet; but they were making a great fuss about the "injustice" that was being done them. Our Colonel, to whom they addressed their remarks, became bored. He left them still talking and came over to us.

"They go to Paris at the same time as you," he announced. "They are fortunate. I should have liked to entertain them for a few days." He shrugged his shoulders and grinned sardonically.

He then asked us for our cards. He shook our hands. The monocle dropped from his eye and he let it dangle on the silken cord.

"I shall call on you in Paris when the war is over," he said, "er-er, that is—if I am still here." He hastily jammed the monocle back into its proper position.

The automobiles for the party were now in the yard, and a captain who was to conduct them told us to take our places. As we drove out our Colonel was standing beside the gate. He was twirling his mustache. As we passed, his free hand came to a friendly salute.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CHERCHE MIDI

IN the automobile which brought us back to Paris, we were guarded by a phenomenon of nature—a taciturn French soldier. His rifle dangled handily across his knee; he gazed at the passing scenery and was dumb to all questions. He was even downright mean; for when a tire blew up, causing half an hour's delay, he would not allow us to stretch our cramped legs in the road.

He would not even let us talk English among ourselves. Once when some one was relating a tale of German atrocity he had heard, our guard scowled blackly at us, lifting his rifle from his knee; and I whispered hastily: "Quiet, or we may become atrocities ourselves!"

We halted before the headquarters of the Military Governor in the Boulevard des Invalides; before the war it had been a school for girls. Although it was late in the evening when we arrived the sidewalk was crowded, as usual, with civilians. The chauffeur waited while the gates into the courtyard were opened. The crowd

caught sight of the armed escort and as we moved forward we caught murmurs of "prisoners of war" and "spies."

We smiled at that—for in a few moments, thought we, this foolishness would all be over, we would be free again. Our "detention" by the jolly Colonel was already a memory, listed in among our "interesting experiences." Speaking in French to pacify our guard, we blithely planned a belated dinner at a boulevard restaurant. We were ravenous; we decided upon its menu from hors-d'œuvres to cheese and were settling the question of wine when some one said:

"We seem to be waiting here a long time. Do you suppose they'd keep us prisoners until morning?"

Our soldier, who by this time had evidently become a little tired of his silence, told us curtly that the Captain in charge of the party, who had preceded us in another car, was conferring as to our fate with officials inside. We were so surprised at this gratuitous information that we offered one of our few remaining cigarettes, which was promptly accepted.

The Captain finally ran down the steps of the building. The other prisoners, who rode in the car with him, had been given some liberty, and



were walking about the courtyard. He called to them and said something which seemed to throw them into fits of rage and dismay.

Then he came to our car, and we knew at once that our dinner, like the Kaiser's, was indefinitely postponed. The Captain did not speak to us at all. He merely ordered the chauffeur to follow the car ahead, then retraced his steps. All the other prisoners but one had reseated themselves.

This one, the amateur journalist who had at one time been an officer in the American militia and was also the relative of a rich man, was standing beside the car. The Captain curtly motioned him to enter; he shook his head vigorously. We could not hear all of the conversation that followed, but it was brief. Finally the Captain raised his voice: "So you will not get into the automobile?" "No," replied the American. "I am an ex-army officer and decline to be treated in such fashion." He also mentioned his influential relative.

I admit that at the moment my sympathies were somewhat with my fellow countryman; but even then I could not help feeling how utterly futile was his objection, on whatever ground it was based. Throughout our entire period of arrest, we—the two friends with whom I had left

Paris and myself—had followed but one rule. Inasmuch as we had suddenly found ourselves in a situation where the chief argument was a rifle and cartridge, we always did exactly as we were ordered. To rebel against soldiers and officers who were only following the orders of their superiors seemed mere folly. The fate of the ex-militia man who declined to enter the automobile proved this point.

The Captain apparently had never heard of his wealthy relative, for he silently signaled to a soldier standing on the steps. The soldier placed the point of his bayonet gently against the stomach of the prisoner, who forthwith backed up the steps of the car and fell across the knees of his companions, who had been cursing him audibly for "playing the fool." The Captain seated himself beside his chauffeur and both cars started out into the night.

We traversed many streets, but I kept peering out of my window and knew our general direction. In a few minutes we drew up in a side street leading from the Boulevard Raspail, before a grimy old building. A soldier with a rifle at salute stood beside its heavy doors. I knew that building. I had passed it every day during many months, for it was just a few blocks from my

house and on the direct route to my office. I had glanced at it curiously as I passed. I had read its history. I wondered if it were as bad on the inside as some of the history depicted.

The doors opened, and I confess I shuddered as we slipped softly into the thick blackness of the courtyard. There was not a sound for a moment, after the chauffeurs cut off the engines. Then a door to the right opened, throwing out a shaft of light. The Captain descended from the car ahead. At the same moment the doors closed with a depressing crash of iron. In that moment my sensations were of an entirely original character.

We all got out of the cars, the prisoners ahead joining us, and stood together in an angry group.

"Where are we?" asked some one.

"Don't you know?" the ex-militia man snarled.

"They've landed us at Saint Lazare!"

"Saint Lazare!" cried several in unison.

One of my friends snorted. "Don't be silly. St. Lazare is the prison for women, not war correspondents."

I roused from my gloomy meditations to break into the conversation.

"I'll tell you where we are if you really care to know," I said. "We're in the Cherche Midi—

the foremost military prison of France. This is the place where Dreyfus awaited his trial. This is the place of the historic rats, etc."

I ceased abruptly. Here I was, a bare ten minutes' walk from my home—and I might as well have been a thousand miles. The clang of those doors had shut off all the world. How long did they expect to keep us there? A night? A week? A month? Perhaps until the war was over? What could we do about it? Nothing. Those doors shut off all hope. We could get no word to any one if our captors did not desire it. We would remain there exactly as long as they wished. No matter what we thought about it—no matter how innocent we were of military misdemeanor. We were prisoners of war in the Cherche Midi—and I understood the Dreyfus case better.

Just before we filed into the examination room whence came the shaft of light, the sage of our party, who had suggested back in the courtyard that we be good prisoners until the right moment arrived, tapped me on the shoulder and spoke in my ear:

"Now's the time," he said. "We must kick now or never. I will begin the rumpus and you follow—and kick hard."

They lined us up in the tiny office where a

lieutenant duly inscribed our names and nefarious profession in the great register. He slammed the book shut, and began directions to an orderly about conducting us to our cells—when the sage spoke.

“What about dinner?” he began.

“Too late,” said the officer. “It’s midnight.”

“Not too late to be hungry,” was the reply. “We have had nothing to eat since noon. Do you want it printed that prisoners are starved in the Cherche Midi?”

The officer reflected. He then consulted with several orderlies and finally stated that there was no available food in the prison, but that he would permit us, at our expense, to have dinner served from a hotel nearby. We agreed to this and the orderlies departed.

This arranged two things which we desired: food—for we were really famished—and time to plan our campaign for liberty before being separated into cells. While the orderlies were gone we made an argumentative onslaught on the Lieutenant in his little cubby-hole office, separated by a low partition from the big gloomy hall where we were told to await our dinner.

We told him in detail who we were, how we happened to be there, all the time insisting on the

injustice of our treatment. He replied that although he could not discuss the merits of our case, it might interest us to know that his orders were to keep us for eight days in solitary confinement, not allowing us to even talk with each other, after that dinner which the orderlies were now spreading on a big table.

Eight days!—and we had already been there a year—or so it seemed. Eight days! Why it was an eternity. And we would not stand it. The fight in all of us was finally aroused. They could drag us to cells and keep us; yes, but dragging would be necessary. We assured him of that.

And then the eagle began to scream. I have often wished when traveling in Europe that so many American tourists would not so constantly keep America and Americanism in the foreground of everything they thought and said and did—but on that night in the Cherche Midi I was as blatant and noisy and proud an American as ever there was. We waved the Stars and Stripes and shouted the Declaration of Independence at the now bewildered officer until he begged us to desist. Earlier in our conversation we had discussed the mighty effects of journalism and how it visited its pleasures and its displeasures. Now we quoted the Constitution of the United States and pro-



duced our passports. We demanded an immediate audience with the American Ambassador.

Our dinner was waiting, and the officer declared finally that if we would only eat it he would see what he could do for us, to the extent of telephoning to the Military Governor. We could hear his part of the telephone conversation as we attacked our food. We never learned with whom he was talking, but he made it strong. He never had such persons as ourselves inside his prison and he would be devoutly thankful to be rid of us. And besides—this was whispered but we caught the drift of it—they were Americans, these prisoners, and perhaps it might be just as well to send some word about them to the American Embassy.

There was more that we could not hear, but finally he informed us that an officer was coming from headquarters to talk with us; that we were to wait where we were.

I do not know what influence, aside from the telephone conversation, intervened in our behalf that night. But I am sure that conversation had little to do with it beyond perhaps securing an immediate rather than deferred action. Perhaps it was an accident, perhaps a change of opinion at the Military Governor's headquarters as to the sentence that had been passed upon us. At

any rate, at the moment we were paying for our dinner and demanding a receipt dated from inside the prison walls (every one of us kept an eye open to newspaper copy in demanding the receipt in such fashion) the door was flung open and a high Government official whom most of us knew personally, entered the room.

His first act was to fling the money from the hands of the hotel servant back upon the table—snatch the receipts, and tear them in pieces.

“Gentlemen, the dinners are on me,” was his greeting.

A few hours later the military attaché of the American Embassy who had been roused from his bed, explained that Mr. Herrick would undertake the personal responsibility for our parole. The gates of the Cherche Midi opened. The heavy arm of military authority had lightened; but the free road to the battle front was still closed.

## CHAPTER XI

### UNDER THE CROIX ROUGE

I NEVER expected to drive a motor ambulance, with badly wounded men, down the Champs Elysées. But I did. I have done many things since the war began that I never expected to do;—but somehow that magnificent Champs Elysées—and ambulances—and groans of wounded seemed a combination entirely outside my wildest imaginations.

This was a result of the eight days' parole, after my release from the Cherche Midi; I was forbidden to write anything concerning my trip to the battle fields.

During those eight days I came to the conclusion that the popularity of journalism in France had reached its lowest ebb. In the antebellum days newspapermen were rather highly regarded in the French capital. They occasionally got almost in the savant class, and folks seemed rather glad to sit near their corners of the cafés and hearken to their words. I found that now,

in popular estimation, they were several degrees below the ordinary criminal, and in fact not far above the level of the spy. Also the wording of my parole was galling. I could not even write private letters to my family, without first obtaining permission at headquarters of the Military Governor.

We had "run into an important turning movement of troops on that trip to the front" was the final official reason assigned for our particular predicament. We were dangerous; we might tell about that turning movement. Therefore the eight days' parole.

Nevertheless, for eight days my activities for my newspaper were suspended, and even then the hope of getting to the front seemed more vague than ever. I thought over every plan that might produce copy, and finally I called on the Ambassador—which was the usual procedure when one had an idea of front-going character.

"I am weary of the reputation that has been bestowed upon me," I told Mr. Herrick. "I am tired of being classified with the thugs and yeggmen. I am tired of being an outcast on the face of Paris. In other words, for the moment I desire to uplift myself from the low level of journalism. I desire to don the brassard of the Red Cross."

"Yes," said the Ambassador, "I don't blame you."

"All right," I rejoined, "but as a journalist they won't have me—unless you give me a bill of health. If you tell them I am not so bad as I look nor so black as I am painted, I stand a chance. I confess frankly that I am actuated by the low motives of my profession. I am first and last a newspaperman and I believe that a Red Cross ambulance may get me to the battle front. However, I am willing to do my share of the work, and if I go into the service with my cards face up and your guarantee—why—"

"Yes," replied Mr. Herrick. "And that goes, provided you will not use the cable until you leave the service."

I promised. The Ambassador kept his word. A week later, vaccinated and injected against disease of every character, clad in khaki, with the coveted badge of mercy sewed on the left sleeve, I was taken into the ranks of the Croix Rouge as an ambulance orderly. I remained for two months—first hauling wounded from great evacuation stations about Paris to hospitals within the walls. Most of our wounded went to the American Ambulance, when we broke all speed laws going through the Champs Elysées, en route

to Neuilly. Later I was stationed at Amiens with the second French army, at that time under the command of General Castelnau. We slept on the floor in a freight station and we worked in the black ooze of the railway yards. The battle front was still many miles away.

One morning when the weather was bleakest (it was now December) and the black ooze the deepest, and the straw from where I had just risen was flattest and moldiest, I received word from Paris to get back quick—that at last the War Office would send correspondents to the front, and that the Foreign Office was preparing the list of neutrals who would go.

I resigned my ambulance job and took the next train. But I kept my brassard with the red cross upon it. I wanted it as a proof of those hard days and sometimes harder nights, when my profession was blotted from my mind—and copy didn't matter—I wanted it because it was my badge when I was an ambulance orderly carrying wounded men, when I came to feel that I was contributing something after all, although a neutral, toward the great sacrifice of the country that sheltered me. I shall keep it always for many things that I saw and heard; but I cherish it most for my recollection of Trevelyan—the Rue Jeanne



d'Arc and those from a locality called Quesnoy-sur-Somme.

(A) TREVELYAN

The orderly on the first bus was sitting at attention, with arms folded, waiting for orders. It was just dawn, but the interior of his bus was clean and ready. He always fixed it up at night, when the rest of us, dog tired, crept into the dank straw, saying we could get up extra early and do it.

So now we were up "extra early," chauffeurs tinkered with engines, and orderlies fumigated interiors; and the First Orderly, sitting at the head of the column, where he heard things, and saw things, got acquainted with Trevelyan.

The seven American motor ambulances were drawn up with a detachment of the British Red Cross in a small village near B——, the railhead where the base hospital was located, way up near the Belgian frontier. The weather was cold. We had changed the brown paint on our busses to gray, making them less visible against the snow. Even the hoods and wheels were gray. All that could be seen at a distance were the two big red crosses blinking like a pair of eyes on the back canvas flaps. The American cars were light and fast and could scurry back out of shell range

quicker than big lumbering ambulances—of which there was a plenty. Therefore we were in demand. The morning that the First Orderly met Trévelyan our squad commander was in conference with the fat major of the Royal Army Medical Corps concerning the strenuous business of the day.

Both the First Orderly and Trévelyan were Somebody's. It was apparent. It was their caste that attracted them to each other. The First Orderly was a prominent figure in the Paris American colony; he knew the best people on both sides of the Atlantic. Now he was an orderly on an ambulance because he wanted to see some of the war. He wanted to do something in the war. There were many like him—neutrals in the ranks of the Croix Rouge.

The detachment of the Royal Army Medical Corps to which Trévelyan belonged arrived late one night and were billeted in a barn. The American corps were in the school house, sleeping in straw on the wood floor. A small evacuation hospital was near where the wounded from the field hospitals were patched up a little before we took them for a long ambulance haul.

Trévelyan was only an orderly. The American corps found this "quaint," as Trévelyan himself

would have said. For the orderly of the medical corps corresponds to the "ranker" of the army. In this war, at a time when officers were the crying demand, the gentlemen rankers had almost disappeared. Among the American volunteers, being the squad commander was somewhat a matter of choice and of mechanical knowledge of our cars. We all stood on an equal footing. But Trevelyan was simply classed as a "Tommy," so far as his medical officers were concerned.

So he showed a disposition to chum with us. He gravitated more particularly to the First Orderly, who reported to the chauffeur of the second bus that Trevelyan had a most comprehensive understanding of the war; that he had also a keen knowledge of medicine and surgery, with which the First Orderly had himself tinkered.

They discussed the value of the war in several branches of surgery. The chauffeur of the second bus heard Trevelyan expounding to the First Orderly on the precious knowledge derived by the great hospital surgeons in Paris and London from the great numbers of thigh fractures coming in—how amputations were becoming always fewer—the men walked again, though one leg might be shorter.

Trevelyan, in his well fitting khaki uniform,

seemed from the same mold as hundreds of clean built Englishmen; lean face, blond hair. His accent was faultlessly upper class. The letter "g" did not occur as a terminating consonant in his conversation. The adjectives "rippin'" or "rotten" conveyed his sentiments one way or the other. His hand clasp was firm, his eye direct and blue. He was a chap you liked.

At our midday meal, which was served apart for the American contingent, the First Orderly asked the corps what they thought of Trevelyan. "I've lived three years in England," said the chauffeur of the second bus, "and this fellow seems to have far less 'side' than most of his class."

The First Orderly explained that this was because Trevelyan had become cosmopolitan—traveled a lot, spoke French and Spanish and understood Italian, whereas most Englishmen scorned to learn any "foreign" tongue.

"Why isn't he in a regiment—he's so superior!" wondered the chauffeur of the second bus. The First Orderly maintained stoutly that there was some good reason, perhaps family trouble, why his new friend was just a common orderly—like himself.

The entire column was then ordered out. They

hauled wounded from the field hospitals to the evacuation camp until nightfall. After dusk they made several trips almost to the trenches. But there were fewer wounded than usual. The cold had lessened the infantry attacks, though the artillery constantly thundered, especially at nightfall.

New orders came in. They were:—Everything ready always for a possible quick advance into L——, which was then an advance post. An important redistribution of General French's "contemptible little army" was hoped for. At coffee next morning our squad commander, after his customary talk with the fat major, admonished us to have little to say concerning our affairs—that talk was a useless adjunct to war.

That day again the First Orderly's dinner conversation was of Trevelyan. Their conversation of that morning had gotten away from armies and surgeons and embraced art people, which were the First Orderly's forte. People were his hobby but he knew a lot about art. This knowledge had developed in the form of landscape gardening at the country places of his millionaire friends. It appeared that he and Trevelyan had known the same families in different parts of the world.

"He knows the G's," he proclaimed, naming a

prominent New York family. "He's been to their villa at Lennox. He spoke of the way the grounds are laid out, before he knew I had been there. Talked about the box perspective for the Venus fountain, that I suggested myself."

The corps "joshed" the First Orderly on that: asked him whether Trevelyan had yet confided the reason for his position in the ranks. The First Orderly was indifferent. He waved a knife loaded with potatoes—a knife is the chief army eating utensil. "He may be anything from an Honorable to a Duke," he said, "but I don't like to ask, for you know how Englishmen are about those things. I have found, though, that he did the Vatican and Medici collections only a year ago with some friends of mine, and I'm going to sound them about him sometime."

There were sharp engagements that afternoon and the corps was kept busy. At nightfall, the booming of the artillery was louder—nearer, especially on the left, where the French heavy artillery had come up the day before to support the British line. The ambulance corps was ordered to prepare for night work. They snatched plates of soup and beans, and sat on the busses, waiting.

At eight o'clock a shell screamed over the line of cars, then another, and two more. "They've



got the range on us," the fat Major said. We'll have to clear out." Eighteen shells passed overhead before the equipment and the few remaining wounded got away and struck the road to the main base at B——.

The American squad was billeted that night in the freight station—dropping asleep as they sank into the straw on the floor. At midnight an English colonel's orderly entered and called the squad commander. They went out together; then the squad commander returned for the Orderly of the first bus. The chauffeur of the second bus waked when they returned after several hours, and heard them through the gloom groping their way to nests in the straw. They said nothing.

It was explained in the morning at coffee. "Trevelyan" had been shot at sunrise. He was a German spy.

### (B) THE RUE JEANNE D'ARC

We were sitting in a café at the *apéritif* hour—an hour that survives the war. We were stationed in a city of good size in Northern France, a city famous for its cathedral and its cheese. Just now it was a haven for refugees, and an evacuation center for wounded. The Germans had been there, as the patronne of the café Lion

d'Or narrated at length to every one who would listen; but now the battle lines were some distance away. If the wind came from the right direction when the noise of the city was hushed by military order at nightfall, the haunting boom-boo-o-m of heavy artillery could be faintly heard. No one who has heard that sound ever forgets it. Dynamite blasting sounds just about the same, but in the sound of artillery, when one knows that it is artillery, there seems the knell of doom.

The café was crowded at the *apéritif* hour. The fat face of the patronne was wreathed in smiles. Any one is mistaken who imagines that all Northern France is lost from human view in a dense rolling cloud of battle smoke. At any rate, in the Café d'Or one looked upon life unchanged. True, there were some new clients in the place of old ones. There were a half dozen soldiers in khaki, and we of the American ambulance column, dressed in the same cloth. In a corner sat a young lieutenant in the gorgeous blue of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, drinking vermouth with a grizzled captain of artillery. Other French uniforms dotted the place. The "honest bourgeois" were all there—the chief supports of the establishment in peace or war. They missed the evening *apéritif* during the twelve days of

German occupation, but now all were in their accustomed places. For the places of oldtimers are sacred at the Lion d'Or.

Madame la patronne acted in place of her husband, who was now safely serving in the cooking department of the army, some kilometers from the firing line. Madame sat contentedly at the caisse superintending the activities of two youthful, inexperienced garçons. The old waiters, Jean and André, vanished into the "zone of military activity" on the first day of the war. After several post cards, Jean had not been heard from. André was killed at the battle of the Marne.

We had heard the garrulous tale of the German occupation many times. It was thrillingly revealed, both at the Restaurant de Commerce and the Hotel de Soleil. At the Lion d'Or it was Madame's absorbing theme, when she was not haranguing the new waiters or counting change. Madame had remained throughout the trouble. "But yes, to be sure." She was not the woman to flee and leave the Lion d'Or to the invaders. Her ample form was firmly ensconced behind the caisse when the first of the Uhlans entered. They were officers, and—wonder of wonders—they spoke French. The new waiters were hiding in the cellar, so Madame clambered from her chair

with dignity, and placed glasses and drink before them. And then—would wonders never cease?—these Germans had actually paid—even overpaid, *ma foi*—for one of them flung a golden half louis on the counter, and stalked from the place refusing change. Of course at the Hotel de Ville, the invaders behaved differently. There the Mayor was called upon for one million francs—war indemnity. But that was a matter for the city and not for the individual. Madame still had that golden half louis and would show it if we cared to see. Gold was scarce and exceedingly precious. The sight of it was good.

Now the Germans were gone—forced out, grace à Dieu, so the good citizens no longer lived in the cellars. They were again in their places at the Lion d'Or, sipping vermouth and offering gratitude to the military régime that had the decency to allow cafés open until eight o'clock. Outside the night was cold and a fine drizzle beat against the windows. Several newcomers shivered and remarked that it must be terrible in the trenches. But the electric lights, the clinking glasses on the marble tables, the rattling coins, soon brought them into the general line of speculation on how long it would take to drive the Germans from France.

For a hundred years the cafés have been the Forum of France. The Lion d'Or had for that entire period been the scene of fierce verbal encounters between members of more political and religious faiths than exist in any other nation of the world. Every Frenchman, no matter how humble in position or purse has decided opinions about something. But now the voices in the Lion d'Or arose only in appellations concerning *les Boches*. There was unanimity of opinion on the absorbing subject of the war.

The members of the American ambulance column sat at a table near the door. Our khaki always brought looks of friendly interest. Almost every one took us to be English, and even those who learned the truth were equally pleased. We finished the *apéritif* and consulted about dinner. We were off duty—we might either return for the army mess or buy our own meal at the restaurant. We paid the *garçon* and decided upon the restaurant a few doors away. Several of the men were struggling into their rubber coats. I told them that I would follow shortly. I had just caught a sentence from across the room that thrilled me. It held a note of mystery—or tragedy. It brought life out of the commonplace normality of *apéritif* hour at the Lion d'Or.

The speakers were two Frenchmen of middle age—fat and bearded. They were dressed in ordinary black, but wore it with a ceremonial rather than conventional manner. The atmosphere of the city did not seem upon them. They might rather be the butcher and the grocer of a small town. One of the pair had sat alone for some time before the second arrived. I had noticed him. He seemed to have no acquaintances in the place—which was unusual. He drank two cognacs in rapid succession—which was still more unusual. One drink always satisfies a Frenchman at *apéritif* hour—and it is very seldom cognac.

When the second man entered the other started from his seat and held out both hands eagerly. "So you got out safe!" were the words I heard; but our crowd was hurrying toward the door, and I lost the actual greeting. I ordered another vermouth and waited.

The two men were seated opposite each other. The first man nervously motioned to the waiter and the newcomer gave his order. It was plain that they were both excited, but the table adjoining was unoccupied, so they attracted no attention. The noisy waiter, banging bottles on the table, drowned out the next few sentences. Then



I heard the second man: "So I got out first, but you managed to get here yesterday—a day in advance."

The other replied: "I was lucky enough to get a horse. They were shelling the market place when I left."

The second man gulped his drink and plucked nervously at the other's sleeve. "My wife is at the hotel," he almost mumbled the words, "I must tell her—you said the market place. But how about the Rue Jeanne d'Arc?—her sister lived there. She remained."

"How about the Rue Jeanne d'Arc?" the other repeated. He clucked his tongue sympathetically. "That was all destroyed in the morning."

The second man drew a handkerchief from his pocket and mopped the sweat from his forehead.

### (C) THOSE FROM QUESNOY-SUR-SOMME

They were climbing out of the cattle cars into the mud of the freight yards. They numbered about fifty,—the old, the halt, the blind and the children. We were whizzing past on a motor ambulance with two desperately wounded men inside, headed for a hospital a half mile away. The Medical Major said that unless we hurried the men would probably be dead when we arrived.

So we could not lessen speed as those from Quesnoy-sur-Somme descended painfully from the cattle cars. Instead, we sounded the siren for them to get out of our way. The mud from our wheels splattered them. But it was not mud—not regular mud. It was black unhealthy ooze, generated after a month of rain in the aged layers of train soot. It was full of fever germs. Typhoid was on the rampage.

As we passed the sentinels at the gates of the yards we were forced to halt in a jam of ammunition and food wagons. To the army that survives is given the first thought. The wounded in the ambulance could wait. We took right of way only over civilians—including refugees.

We asked a sentinel concerning those descending from the cattle cars, “*là bas.*” He said they came from a place called Quesnoy-sur-Somme. It was not a city he told us, nor a town—not even a village. Just a straggling hamlet along the river bank—a place called Quesnoy-sur-Somme.

The past tense was the correct usage of the verb. The place *was* that; but now—now it is just a black path of desolation beside a lifeless river. The artillery had thundered across the banks for a month. The fish floated backs down on the water.

When the ammunition and food wagons gave us room enough, we again raced through the streets and delivered our wounded at the hospital—alive. Then we returned to the freight yards for more. Several ambulance columns had worked through the night from the field hospitals to the freight yards. There the men were sorted and the less desperate cases entrained.

We plowed our way carefully through the ooze of the yards, for ahead of us walked those from Quesnoy-sur-Somme on their way to the *gare*. They walked slowly—painfully, except the children, who danced beside our running board and laughed at the funny red crosses painted on the canvas sides of the ambulance. It was raining—as usual. The sky was the coldest gray in the universe, and the earth and dingy buildings, darker in tone, were still more dismal. But one tiny child had a fat slab of bread covered thickly with red jam. She raised her sticky pink face to ours and laughed gloriously. She waved her pudgy fist holding the bread and jam, and shouted, “Vive la France!”

We were now just crawling through the mire. The refugees surrounded us on all sides. The mother seized the waving little arm, and dragged the child away. The woman did not look at us.

She just plodded along, eyes fixed on the mud that closed over her shoes at every step. She was bareheaded and the rain glistened in great drops upon her hair. The child hung back. The mother merely tightened her grip, doggedly patient. She was past either curiosity or reproof.

Our car ran so slowly that accidentally we killed the engine. I got out to crank her up and meantime the forlorn mass surged by. Two soldiers herded them over the slippery tracks to a shed beside the gare where straggled some rough benches. We lined our car up behind the other ambulances. Then we went to look at the refugees.

They had dropped onto the benches, except the children. The littlest ones tugged fretfully at their mothers' skirts. The others ran gleefully about, fascinated by the novelty of things. It was a holiday. Several Red Cross women were feeding the crowd, passing about with big hampers of bread and pots of coffee. Each person received also a tin of dried meat; and a cheese was served to every four. We helped carry the hampers.

Most of the refugees did not even look at us; they did not raise their eyes from the mud. They reached out their hands and took what we gave them. Then they held the food in their laps,

listless; or staring out across the yards into the wet dusk.

One or two of them talked. They had been hustled out at sunrise. The French army thought they had occupied that dangerous place long enough. There was no longer hope for any living thing remaining. So they came away—bringing nothing with them, herded along the line by soldiers. Where they were going they did not know. It did not matter where. "*C'est la guerre!* It is terrible—yes." They shrugged their shoulders. It is war!

One old man, nearly blind and very lame, sat forlornly at one end of the line. He pulled at an empty pipe. We gave him some tobacco—some fresh English tobacco. He knew that it was not French when he rolled it in his hand. So we explained the brand. We explained patiently, for he was very deaf. He was delighted. He had heard of English tobacco, but had never had any. He stuffed the pipe eagerly and lit it. He leaned back against the cold stone wall and puffed in ecstasy. Ah! this English tobacco *was* good. He was fortunate.

We glanced back along the line. As we looked several of the women shrank against the wall. One covered her eyes. Two French ambulances



passed, carrying a wounded Zouave on a stretcher. A yard engine went shrieking across their path and the ambulanciers halted. The huddled figure under the blankets groaned horribly. Then the procession proceeded to our first ambulance. The men were on the seat, ready for the race against time to the hospital.

After a few minutes the soldiers who had herded the refugees into the shed came again to herd them out—back to the cattle cars. I asked one of the soldiers where they were going. He waved his hand vaguely toward the south. *Là bas,*” he muttered. He didn’t know exactly. They were going somewhere—that was all. There was no place for them here. This station was for wounded. And would they ever return? He shrugged his shoulders.

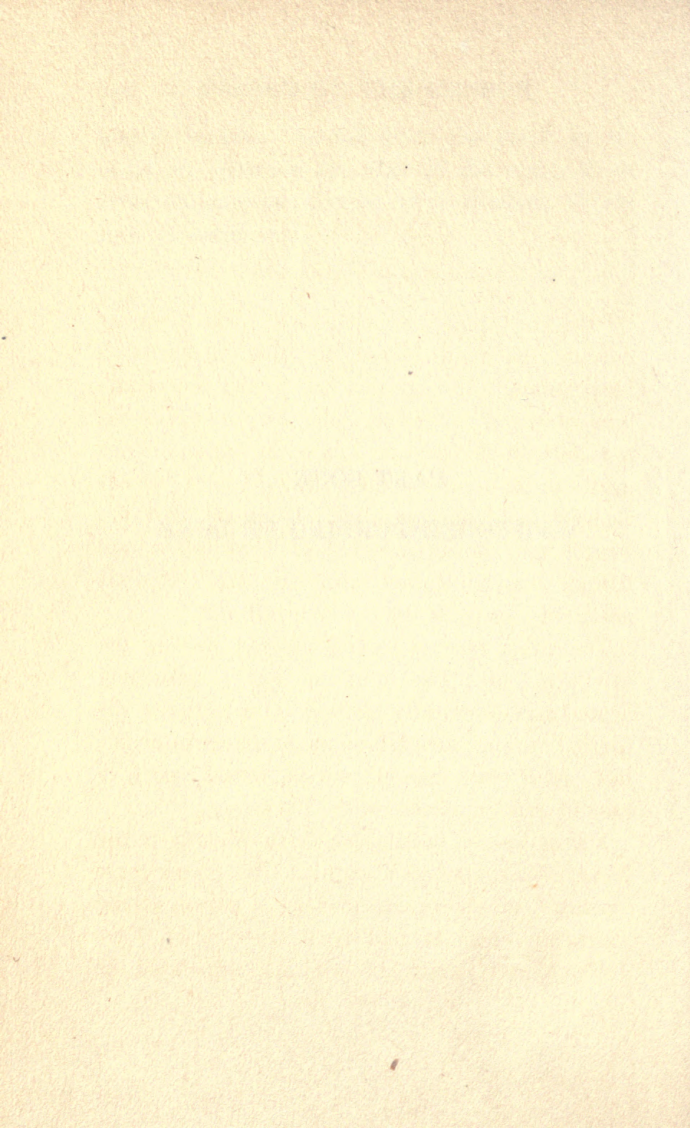
I looked at the forlorn procession sloshing across the yards. The rain beat harder. It was almost dark; the yard lamps threw dismal, sickish gleams across the tracks. The old man with the tobacco brought up the rear, helped along by an old woman hobbling on a stick.

We heard the voice of the Medical Major bawling for “*les ambulances Américaines.*” We looked behind into the gloom of the gare; a procession emerged—stretchers with huddled forms



under blankets. As far down the yards as we could see—just on the edge of the night, those from Quesnoy-sur-Somme were climbing slowly into the cattle cars.

PART FOUR  
WAR-CORRESPONDING DE LUXE



## CHAPTER XII

### OUT WITH CAPTAIN BLANK

“GRAND Quartier Général!” The sentry barring the road jerked his rifle instantly to rigid salute. The speaker sat beside the chauffeur of a big limousine. He wore a wonderful new horizon-blue captain’s uniform, but on his left arm was the colored silken brassard of the Great General headquarters staff. It meant that the wearer was the direct agent of Père Joffre, and though sentries dotted our route the chauffeur never once brought the car to a full halt.

Two other neutral correspondents were in the car with me. The tonneau was comfortably heated and electrically lighted. Our baggage was carried in other cars behind us, in charge of orderlies. Still other cars carried an armed escort, in case of sudden attack on the lines.

For at last we were going forth officially to the front. No sentry could stop us. No officer could “detain” us—there was no fear of prison at our journey’s end. It had been decided by Père Joffre himself; and “Himself” had appointed the



Captain, whose orders were to remain with us even after our return to Paris, where he would wait to place the magic visé of the État Major upon our despatches, thus preventing any delays at the regular Bureau de Censure.

Comfortable rooms had been reserved in hotels of little villages behind the trenches. Far in advance meals had been commanded to be ready at the hours of our arrival. Every detail of each day's program had been carefully arranged. And in case we did become accidentally separated from our Captain, each of us carried a pass issued by the Ministry of War bearing our photographs and in dramatic language fully accrediting us as correspondents to the armies of the Republic.

So we lighted our cigars and lolled at our ease, feeling our own importance just a bit as each sentry saluted respectfully the Captain's silken brasard.

In the company of Captain Blank I have secured the greatest part of the cable copy that the war has furnished me, but on that first ride through the snow fields of Northern France, I little realized that on my return to Paris I would send America the most important cable that I had ever filed in my life: for it was the first detailed

description of the French army permitted for publication after the battle of the Marne. Many times during that trip we asked each other what "news" there was in all that we saw that was worth cabling, when a five-cent postage stamp would carry it by letter. It was all interesting, some of it decidedly exciting; but not once did we witness a general engagement of the army. There was no storming of forts, no charges of the cavalry, no capitulation of troops. It was just the deadly winter waiting in the trenches, with the sentries who never slept at the port-holes and the artillery incessantly pounding away at the rear. I decided that there was nothing worth cabling in the story.

When I returned to Paris, and a steam-heated apartment, the reaction on my physical forces was so great that I went to bed for several days with the grippe. As I impatiently fumed to get to work on the story of my trip, it suddenly dawned upon me that it was a cable story after all. Why, it was one of the biggest cable stories possible—it was the story of the French army. I had just been permitted a real view of it, the first accorded any correspondent in so comprehensive a manner. I had followed a great section of the fighting line, had been in the trenches under fire, and had



received scientific, detailed information regarding this least known of European forces.

True, we correspondents knew what a powerful machine it was. We knew it was getting stronger every day. But America did not, and Germany meanwhile was granting interviews, taking correspondents to the trenches and up in balloons and aeroplanes in their campaign for neutral sympathy. Now France, or rather General Joffre—for his was the first and last word on the subject of war correspondents—had decided to combat the German advertising. Captain Blank was still waiting in Paris for my copy—cable copy marked “rush”—which I dictated in bed.

“This army has nothing to hide,” said one of the greatest generals to me, during the trip. “You see what you like, go where you desire and if you cannot get there, ask.”

While our party did all the spectacular stunts the Germans had offered the correspondents in such profusion, such as visiting the trenches, where once a German shell burst thirty feet from us, splattering us with mud, where also snipers sent rifle balls hissing only a few feet away, our greatest treats were the scientific daily discourses given by Captain Blank, touching the entire his-

tory of the first campaign, explaining each event leading up to the present position of the two armies. He gave the exact location of every French and Allied army corps on the entire front.

On the opposite side of the line he demonstrated the efficiency of the French secret service by giving full details of the position and name of every German regiment, even to the date of its arrival.

Our Captain explained the second great German blunder after their failure to occupy Paris. This was their mistake in not at once swinging a line across Northern France, cutting off Calais and Boulogne, where they could have leveled a pistol at England's head. He explained that the superior French cavalry dictated that the line should instead run straight north through the edge of Belgium to the sea. And he refuted by many military arguments the theory that cavalry became obsolete with the advent of aeroplanes.

Cavalry formerly was used to screen the infantry advance and also for shock purposes in the charges. Now that the lines are established, it is mostly used with the infantry in the trenches; but in the great race after the Marne to turn the western flanks it was the cavalry's ability to outstrip the infantry that kept the Germans from

possession of all Northern France. In other words, the French chasseurs, more brilliant than the Uhlans, kept that northern line straight until the infantry corps had time to take up position.

Once, on passing from the second line to a point less than a hundred yards from the German rifles, I came face to face with a general of division. He was sauntering along for his morning's stroll, which he chose to take in the trenches with his men rather than on the safer roads at the rear. He smoked a cigarette and seemed careless of danger. He continually patted his soldiers on the back as he passed and called them "his little braves."

I could not help wondering then and since whether the German general opposite was setting his men the same splendid example. I inquired the French general's name; he was General Fayolle, conceded by all the armies to be one of the greatest artillery experts in the world. Comradeship between officers and men always is general in the French army, but I never before realized fully the officers' willingness to accept the same fate as their men.

In Paris the popular appellation for a German is "boche." Not once at the front did I hear this word used by officers or men. They deplore it,

just as they deplore many things that happen in Paris. Every officer I talked to declared the Germans were a brave, strong enemy; they waste no time calling them names.

"They are wonderful, but we will beat them," was the way one officer summed up the general feeling.

Another illustration of the French officer at the front: the city of Vermelles, of 10,000 inhabitants, was captured from the Germans after thirty-four days' fighting. It was taken literally from house to house, the French engineers sapping and mining the Germans out of every stronghold, destroying every single house, incidentally forever upsetting my own one-time idea that the French are a frivolous people. So determined were they to retake this town that they fought in the streets with artillery at a distance of twenty-one feet, probably the shortest range artillery duel in the history of the world.

The Germans before the final evacuation buried hundreds of their own dead. Every yard in the city was filled with little crosses—the ground was so trampled that the mounds of graves were crushed down level with the ground—and on the crosses are printed the names, with the number of the German regiments. At the base of every

cross rested either a crucifix or a statue of the Virgin or a wreath of artificial flowers, all looted from the French graveyard.

With the German graves were French graves, made afterward. I walked through this ruined city where, aside from the soldiers, the only sign of life I saw was a gaunt, prowling cat. With me, past these hundreds of graves, walked half a dozen French officers. They did not pause to read inscriptions; they did not comment on the loot and pillage of the graveyard; they scarcely looked even at the graves, but they constantly raised their hands to their caps in salute, regardless of whether the crosses marked a French or a German life destroyed.

Another illustration of French humanity:

We were driving along back of the advance lines. On the road before us a company of territorial infantry, after eight days in the trenches, were now marching back to two days of repose at the rear. Plodding along the same road was a refugee mother and several little children in a donkey cart; behind the cart, attached by a rope, trundled a baby buggy with the youngest child inside. The buggy suddenly struck a rut in the road and overturned, spilling the baby into the mud. Terrible wails arose; the soldiers stiffened



to attention. Then, seeing the accident, the entire company broke ranks and rescued the infant. They wiped the dirt from its face and helped the mother to bestow it again in the cart.

Our motor had halted; and our captain from the Great General Headquarters, in his gorgeous blue uniform, climbed from the car, and discussed with the mother the safety of a baby buggy riding behind a donkey cart; at the same time congratulating the soldier who had rescued the child.

I took a brief ride at the front in an ante-bellum motorbus,—there being nothing left in Paris but the trams and subway. Busses have since been used to carry fresh meat, to transport troops and also ammunition. We trundled merrily along a little country road, the snow-white fields on either side in strange contrast to the scenery when last I rode in that bus, in my daily trips from my home to the *Times* office in Paris. The bus was now riddled with bullets, but the soldier conductor still jingles the bell to the motorman, although he carries a revolver where he formerly wore the register for fares.

Trench life was one of the surprises of the trip. Every night since the war began I had heard pitying remarks about “the boys in the trenches,” especially if the nights were cold. I was, there-



fore, prepared to find the men standing in water to the knees, shivering, wretched, sick and unhappy. I found just the contrary—the trenches were clean, large and sanitary, although, of course, mud is mud. The bottoms of the trenches in every instance were corduroy-lined with modern drains, which keep the feet perfectly dry. In the large dugouts the men, except those doing sentry duty, sleep comfortably on dry straw. There are special dugouts for officers and artillery observers.

Although the maps show the lines of fighting to be rather wavy, one must go to the front really to appreciate the zigzag, snake-like line that it really is. The particular bit of trenches we visited covered a front of twelve miles; but so irregular was the line, so intricate and vast the system of intrenchments, that they measured 200 miles on that particular twelve-mile fighting front.

Leaving the trenches at the rear of the communication *boyaux*, it is astonishing how little of the war can be seen. Ten feet after we left our trenches we could not see even the entrance. We stood in a beautiful open field having our pictures taken, and a few hundred yards away our motor waited behind some trees. Suddenly we heard a

“zip zip” over our heads. German snipers were taking shots at us.

With all considerations for the statement that the Germans have the greatest fighting machine the world has ever seen, the French army to me seemed invincible from the standpoints of power, intelligence and humanity. This latter quality, judging from the generals in command to the men in the trenches, especially impressed me. I did not and I do not believe that an army with such ideals as the French army can be beaten.

So I wrote my cable and sent it to Captain Blank. He viséd it, at the same time sending me a letter which I cherish among my possessions. He thanked me for the sentiments I had expressed and told me that a copy of the story would be sent to General Joffre.

A few days later I met the *doyen* of war correspondents, Frederick Villiers, in a boulevard café. He was out with me on that trip. But he began war-corresponding with Archibald Forbes at the battle of Plevna. This is his seventeenth war. I said to him:

“Mr. Villiers, what did you do with the story of this trip to the front; you who have been in so many battles; you who have had a camel shot under you in the desert; you who escaped from

Port Arthur; you who have seen more war than any living man? What do you think of this latest edition of war?"

He answered: "It is different, very different, in many ways; but this trip from which we have just returned is the biggest war spectacle that I've ever had!"

Villiers, too, had seen the French army.

## CHAPTER XIII

### JOFFRE

"GIVE the French a leader and they can do anything." Before the war and since I have heard this thought more than any other expressed in cafés, homes and political assemblies.

Forty-four years before the present war, almost to a day, France discovered that her last Napoleon had only the name of his great ancestor, and none of his genius. During all that time she had prayed for a new leader—not of the name, for Bonaparte princes may not even fight for France—but for genius sufficient to restore her former military prestige among the nations.

General Joffre, at the beginning of the war, had been head of the army for only three years. He had received his supreme command as a compromise between political parties. No one knew anything about him—he had a good military record and was considered "safe." But at the last grand maneuvers he had given the nation a sudden jar by unceremoniously and without comment dismissing five gold-laced generals.

On one of the first days of the war, at four in the morning, I was walking home—all taxis were mobilized—after a night passed in writing cable copy for my newspaper concerning the momentous tragedy that faced the world.

I was accompanied by a journalistic confrère; our route led along the Quai d'Orsay, past the Foreign Office, where the Cabinet of France had been sitting all night in war council. It was just daybreak. The sun was beginning to glint on the waters of the Seine. We walked up the Boulevard des Invalides and halted, without speaking, but in common thought, before the tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte. The sun suddenly broke in splendor over the golden dome.

"It seems like a good omen," I said to my friend.

"Yes—if France had a Napoleon to-day . . ." was his reply.

He was a newcomer to Paris.

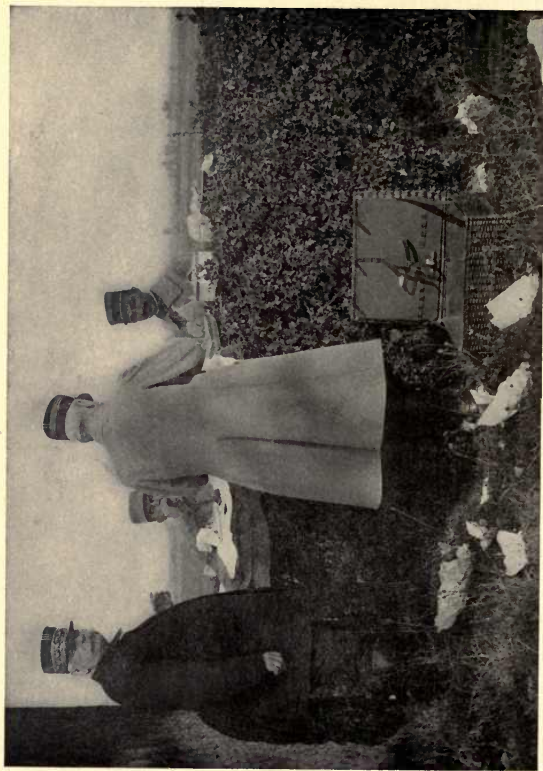
"Tell me about the Commander-in-Chief," he asked me. "Who is Joffre, anyway?"

I told him what everybody knew, which was almost nothing.

Now let me shift the picture from the tomb of Napoleon on a sunny morning in August. It is a bleak day on the undulating plains of Cham-







GENERAL JOFFRE LUNCHING JUST BEHIND THE FIGHTING LINE IN CHAMPAGNE

pagne—a few kilometers to the rear of the battle-lines, where the French had been steadily gaining ground for several weeks. Only the week before they brilliantly stormed the hills where the Germans had entrenched after the battle of the Marne, and they captured every position.

A fine drizzle had been falling since early morning, making the ground soggy and slippery. Along the roads the crowds of peasants and inhabitants of near-by villages are sloshing toward the great open plain. But all the roads are barred by sentries and they are turned back. No civilian eyes except those of a half dozen newspapermen may see what is to happen there. Yes, something is to happen there—something impressive—something soul-stirring—but there are to be no cheering spectators, no heraldry and no pomp.

It is to be a military pageant, without the crowd. It is a change from the ante-bellum military show at Longchamps on the fourteenth of July, when the tri-color waved everywhere, when the President of the Republic and the generals of the army in brilliant uniforms reviewed the troops of France, and all the great world was there to see.

This is to be a review of the troops who took the hills back there a little way, sweeping on and

up to victory while a murderous German fire poured into them, dropping them by thousands. Through that clump of trees sticking up in the mud, are little crosses marking the graves of the dead.

Fifteen thousand of the victorious troops will pass in review to-day before the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies. Down across the field you can hear the distant notes of a bugle. They are taken up by other buglers at various points. Then across the field comes a regimental band. The players have been in the charge too—with rifles instead of musical instruments. This is their first chance to play in months—and play they do. You hear the martial notes of the Marseillaise floating across the field, played with a force that must have been heard in the German lines.

The regiments take up their positions at one side of the field. General Langle de Carry, commander of the army that did the Champagne fighting, with only a half dozen officers, take positions at the reviewing stand. The reviewing stand is a hillock of mud. Both general and officers wear the long overcoats of the light "horizon blue," the new color of the French army.

A man emerges from the line of trees behind the group and plows his way across the mud. He is large and bulky. He plants his feet firmly at each step—splashing the mud out in all directions. He wears a short jacket of the “horizon blue” and no overcoat. He wears the old red trousers of the beginning of the war. His hat, around which you can see the golden band of oak leaves signifying that he is a general, is pulled low over his eyes. Drops of rain are on his grizzled mustache. A leather belt is about his powerful body, but he wears no sword.

Langle de Carry and his officers whirl about quickly at his approach. Every hand is raised in salute. The bulky man touches the visor of his hat in response—then plants both his large ungloved fists upon his hips. His feet are spread slightly apart. He speaks to de Carry in a low voice. As you have already guessed, this big man is Joffre.

You were told at the beginning of the war that Joffre was a little fat man—like Napoleon. That is not true. Joffre is a big man. He is even a tall man, but does not look so because of his bulk. Few men possess, at his age, such a powerful or so healthy a body. That is why he can cover so

many miles of battle front in his racing auto every day. That is why he shows not the slightest sign of the wear and tear of war.

No time is lost in conversation. The bugles blew again and the regiments of heroes began their march past the muddy reviewing stand. Even in their battle-stained uniforms, every regiment looked "smart." When they came abreast of Joffre, stolidly and solidly standing a step in advance of the others, the long line of rifles raised in salute is as straight as ever that of a German regiment on parade at Potsdam, despite deep and slippery mud.

After the infantry came the famous "seventy-fives" with the same machine-like precision that before the war we always associated with Germans. The review ends with a regiment of heavy cavalry—cuirassiers—coming at full charge, rising high in their stirrups, with swords aloft, and breaking into a battle yell when they passed "Father Joffre," as he is called by his soldiers.

Through it all he stands motionless, feet apart, one hand planted on his hip, raising the other to the visor of his hat, peering beneath it straight ahead with unblinking eyes. As the men pass this general without a sword, with no medals, no gold braid, no overcoat—and in old red trousers



—the rain pelting upon him, the look on their faces is one of adoration. It matters not to them that there are no cheering crowds, no crashing bands, no gala atmosphere. The one eye in France that they care about is upon them.

The long line then forms facing him, and the men to receive decorations advance. One of them—a private—is to receive the *médaille militaire*, the greatest war decoration in the world, for it can only be given to privates, or to generals commanding armies who have already received the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor. Joffre himself only won it after the battle of the Marne.

The private now to receive the medal is brought before the Commander-in-Chief, who pins it upon his breast. Joffre throws both his great arms about the private's shoulders and kisses him on both cheeks. The long line of soldiers remains perfectly quiet. But in the eyes of many of them are tears.

The program is ended. Father Joffre gets into his low, gray automobile and disappears in a swirl of mud, to some other part of the "zone of operations."

The army now knows it has the real leader that it waited for so long. To the general public of France Joffre is still a mystery. But they are



content with their mystery—they have faith in him. That is the spirit of the new France—a quiet faith and determination that certainly has deceived the rest of the world, especially Germany. It is the spirit of a nation that has found itself, and Joffre typifies it.

A few books have appeared giving some information about the Commander-in-Chief. They deal chiefly with his march to Timbuctoo and his career in Indo-China. For the rest, Parisians know that before the war he lived quietly in a little villa in Auteuil, and that next to his love for his family, the things he regarded as best in all the world are peace and fishing. Recently it was learned that he commandeered a barge on one of the rivers near the battle line—and there he sometimes sits and quietly fishes while thinking out new army plans. His only other recreation at the front is reading at night before going to bed from his favorite authors, Balzac, Dumas and Charles Dickens. Joffre understands English and reads it but will not speak it. "It is that he has an accent which he likes not," explained one of his officers.

What Parisians cannot understand is how it was that this quiet, perfectly unemotional man came into being in the Midi—as Southern France

is called. From the Midi, as from Corsica, come the hotheads and the firebrands. The crowd certainly expected, when this war came, that the Commander-in-Chief of the army would give Paris a real treat before going forth to battle—that he would parade the boulevards in dress uniform at the head of his troops. Alas! Paris has scarcely heard a band play since the war began.

All the time that Joffre lived in the little villa in Auteuil he was planning and waiting for the day when he should go forth to battle. He was a fatalist to the extent that he felt by reason of his appointment to office three years before that he was the chosen man to administer “the revenge”—that he would lead the armies of France against Germany. He never forgot it for an instant. It was Joffre who did everything that a human being could do before the war, to prepare for *the day*. It was Joffre who perfected the scheme of mobilization, so that France was not caught entirely unprepared.

The word “prepare” was always on his lips. His command of language is forcible, as his “orders of the day” have shown. In one of his early addresses to the students of the École Polytechnique, his closing words, uttered with a vigor

that simply burned into the students, were: "May God forgive France if she is not ready."

And so when the war drums indeed began to roll—when a military régime was declared throughout France, and the politicians entered either into retirement or uniform—France suddenly learned that she had a regular czar on the job. The dismissal of five generals at maneuvers was not a patch on what was about to happen to the gold-laced brigade—after the battle of Charleroi, for instance. Joffre has retired so many generals that the public has lost track of the number. Usually he does it with an utterly disconcerting lack of comment or explanation. Only occasionally does he assign that General Blank has been dropped from active service "for reasons of health."

But he is just as quick with promotions. The brilliant de Maud'huy, for instance, who was only a brigade commander in the battle of the Marne, now commands an entire army.

I asked a high officer concerning the war councils at the "Grand Quartier General." His reply was brief. "The war council," he said, "is Joffre. He just tells everybody what to do—and they do it." That is Napoleonic enough, isn't it? Not even the President of France may go to the

front without Joffre's permission—and if the Minister of War entered the zone of operations without a *laisser-passer* from the Grand Quartier General he would very likely be arrested. Only Joffre would call it "detention"—not arrest.

And as for journalists in that forbidden zone of operations—well—has not enough been written already concerning journalists going to jail? But even to journalists Joffre is entirely fair—only journalists must play the game according to Joffre's rules.

I happen to know that Joffre has a thoroughly organized press clipping bureau at the Ministry of War and every week marked papers—particularly those of neutral nations—are presented to him. One of my proud possessions is a letter that I received from an officer of this bureau stating that one of my cables to the *New York Times* had been favorably commented on by the Commander-in-Chief.

"Is this man a great military genius?" is still a question often asked—despite the fact that he has a hold on the army such as no man has had since Napoleon Bonaparte. The war is not over. The Germans are still in France. Nevertheless all military observers and critics with whom I have talked agree on one point. That is that the

two weeks' retreat which culminated in the battle of the Marne showed Joffre to be a strategist of the very highest order. And any man who could direct the retreat of an army, especially a French army, for two weeks and so preserve that army's morale that he could then turn it around to victory, must have great qualities of genius.

Ever since, Joffre has given ample evidence of his quality as a master in the art of war, but he has forsaken the code of war known as the Napoleonic strategy which was in brief: "Go where your enemy does not expect you to go." Joffre knows perfectly well that in modern war, over such a vast front, such tactics are impossible; he knows that ninety-nine times out of one hundred your enemy, through his aeroplanes and spies, will know where you are going.

Joffre indicated his idea of modern strategy some months after the war began when he said, "I am nibbling at them." The nibbles have gradually become mouthfuls.

Joffre thinks all war is too useless for unnecessary sacrifice of men. He saves them all he can. That is why he would not send reenforcements when the Germans attacked in front of Soissons, in the presence of the Kaiser. The Germans were vastly superior in numbers at that point.

The weather was frightful. Joffre figured that the French losses would be too heavy in a general battle there. He knew too that the swollen river Aisne would quite as effectively prevent a German advance. And it did. Joffre did not send reenforcements to Soissons in face of both appeals and public opinion.

Nothing moves him, when he is convinced that he is right. And a general of a combination of armies who doggedly does what he wants to do, whatever any one else thinks about it—who dismisses all opposition with a very quiet wave of the hand, as Joffre does, undoubtedly possesses an overpowering personality.

Joffre is the last man on earth to hold his enemy lightly. No man knows better than he how strong the Germans are. But he will keep up that steady hammering, first at this point—then at that point—then simultaneously all along the line, pressing them back one mile here and two miles there, until the German army is beaten and out of France. That is what has been going on now, although a large scale map is necessary to note just how steadily and how gradually the Germans have been pressed back everywhere by the advancing French wall of steel.

Let us go back a moment to that sunny August



dawn of the beginning of the war. I said to my friend as we stood looking at the tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte: "I wonder what that man would do if he could come out of that block of granite and command this army?"

My friend replied:

"I think he would shut himself up in a room and read all night the history of all wars from his day to now. Then in the morning he would call in a few generals and hear them talk. After that he would take lunch with some manufacturers of arms and ammunition. He would take tea with some boss mathematicians and scientists. He might then go for a walk alone. By dinner, I believe he would be on to the job of modern military strategy and ready for work."

Whether General Joseph Joffre is the reincarnation of Napoleon Bonaparte, I am unable to even discuss. He is the perfect antithesis of the little Corsican in many ways, and he has tackled a bigger job than Bonaparte ever dreamed of. But the heart of a nation never beat more hopefully than that of the new and united France.

"When the war is over—and if Joffre is the conqueror—what will he do then?"—is another question asked nowadays. I have heard it remarked that private life with comparative obliv-

ion may not be easy for the great military hero who now has both a Belgian king and a British field marshal taking his orders.

And I have already heard comment on what a great show Paris will have when the war is over—how the Grand Army of France headed by Father Joffre will march under the Arch of Triumph and down the Champs-Élysées—while the applauding world looks on.

Perhaps so. I do not know. I have already said that two things Joffre loves best in all the world, next to his family, are peace and fishing. I have a private suspicion that once peace is declared, Father Joffre may turn his back upon Paris and go fishing.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MAN OF THE MARNE AND THE YSER

It was a drippy day—a day when winter overcoats were uncomfortable but necessary to protect against a wind that swept over the plateau of Artois. A party of newspapermen were beginning a war-corresponding *de luxe* program arranged by the French war office. The Paris-Boulogne express had been commanded to stop at Amiens, where limousines were waiting in charge of an officer of the Great General Staff.

I knew Amiens of old. As an ambulance driver at the beginning of the war, when the unpopularity of correspondents reached the maximum, I had brought wounded to the Amiens hospitals. So I knew the roads in all directions.

I pushed the raindrops from the automobile window. We were not going in the direction of the battle lines but parallel with them, and then bending into a road toward the rear. I communicated this intelligence to my companions. One of them, an old-timer, yawned and said:

"Oh, it is usually this way on the first day of a trip. We are probably on the way to visit some general. It takes a lot of time but we must act as though we liked it."

"But if the general is a Somebody, it will be worth while, especially if we can interview," suggested another.

"We cannot," the old-timer said composedly, "and he probably will not be a Somebody. This is a long battle line. They have a lot of generals. We are probably calling on only a general of brigade. It is possible that we will not remember his name. He will tell us that we are welcome. It is a drawback of modern war corresponding, especially if he invites us to dinner."

"Why, what would be the matter with that?"

"The dinner will be excellent," was the answer. "The dinner of a general begins with *hors d'œuvres* and ends with cordials—two or three different brands. There will be speeches and there will be no visit to the trenches—there will be no time."

There was no response and our car sloshed along in the rain.

We stopped before a little red brick cottage set back from the road in the midst of a grove of pines. A gravel walk led to the steps of a small

square veranda where a sentry stood at salute. We were in the country. No other houses were near.

A young lieutenant ran down the walk and greeted us.

"I don't know how you will be received inside," was his strange utterance. "He said he wanted to see you. That is why we sent word to Amiens. But it doesn't matter whether you are journalists or generals. He treats all comers the same—that is, just according to how he feels. He will either talk to you or he will expect you to do all the talking. I just wanted to tell you in advance to expect anything."

I climbed out of the car, wondering. I followed the young lieutenant into the building. I stood with the others in a little reception hall where an orderly took our hats and coats. Facing us was a door. On it was pinned a white page torn from an ordinary writing pad. Scrawled in ink, were the words, "*Bureau du Général.*"

The party was curiously silent. I felt that this visit to a general would be different from anything I had experienced before. We all became a little restless and nervous. I turned toward a table near the wall. On it was a French translation of Kipling's "Jungle Book." I picked it



GENERAL FOCH

"The Man of the Marne and the Yser"





up thinking how curious it was to find such a book at the headquarters of a general. I gasped with surprise as I saw the name of the general written on the first page.

A buzzer sounded and an orderly bounded in from the veranda, threw open the door marked with the white writing page, turned to us, saying, "*Entrez, Messieurs.*"

We entered a large room with many windows, all hung with dainty white lace. Despite the gloomy day the room seemed sunny, for there were at least a dozen vases filled with yellow flowers. Between two dormer windows opening upon a garden was stretched a great yellow map, dotted with lines and stuck all over with tiny tri-colored flags. Before this map and studying it closely, with his back half turned toward us, stood a little man. A thick stump of unlighted cigar was between his teeth. His shoulders were thrown back, his hands clutched tightly behind him. He wore the full uniform of a general, with long cavalry boots and spurs. At the sound of our entrance, he swung about dramatically, on one heel. We caught sight of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor blazing on his breast. He wore no other decorations, and I noted the absence of a sword. The light fell full upon his handsome, but

ravaged and aging face. The memory of all that I had heard about him raced across my mind in the short time before I felt him seize my hand, saw his blue eyes boring into mine, heard him asking questions and stating facts directly to me. For this was the man who sent the famous message to General Joffre at the critical moment of the battle of the Marne, that inasmuch as his left was crushed and his right thrown back, he proposed to attack with his center. This was the man who later stemmed the German tide at the Yser, and saved Calais and the Channel ports. This was the man who has ever since commanded the Group of Armies of the North, Belgian, English and French, driving the enemy inch by inch through the Labyrinth and out of Artois. This man, the dashing *beau ideal* of the French army, the great strategist of the École de Guerre, the nearest of all Frenchmen to approach the "man on horseback" picture of the military hero, this man who was talking to me, and frankly telling me of important things was General Foch.

I found myself answering his questions mechanically. I told him the name of the paper that I represented, also that this was my third visit to the battle front in Artois.

"Ah, yes. I know your paper," he said. "I

read it. It has been one of the great forums for the discussion of the war. You have printed both sides of the question."

"But we are in favor of the Allies!" I interrupted.

"I know that also—that is why you have come a third time to Artois."

The next correspondent in the line was a Spaniard. Foch eyed him for a moment. "I know you," he said. "I met you in Madrid six years ago." The correspondent bowed with amazement at the general's memory. He passed along the line, shaking hands. He stopped before a tall Dutchman, the representative of a paper in Amsterdam.

"Ho! Ho!—the big representative of a little nation." The Dutchman was poked in the ribs with the genial index finger of the General's right hand. "Don't you know that if Germany wins, your country will be swallowed up? You have developed a great commerce and valuable industries. Germany will never be your friend. As of old, the big fish will eat the little one." Then he swung back down the line, in my direction.

"You have already been twice on my battle front. You have seen a great difference between the first and second trips. You will see another

great change now. Perhaps you will come here still again—for the last great offensive,—in Artois.”

“What do you mean, *mon general?*” I asked.

The little man was silent for a moment, chewing the end of his cigar and looking steadily, first at one and then at another of us. I shall never forget his words. They revealed the cardinal necessity for waging modern war.

“We have shown,” he said slowly, “that we can go through them any time we like. The great need is shells. The consumption of shells during the last offensive was fantastic. But still we did not shoot enough.” He stopped, then said still more slowly: “The next time we will shoot enough.”

“And then, *mon general?*” asked the Spaniard. “And then?”

“And then,” Foch replied, “and then we shall keep on advancing, and the Germans will have to go away.”

He again swung dramatically on his heel, until his back was turned to us. “*Au revoir, Messieurs,*” he said, and as we filed silently and somewhat dazedly from the room, he was again standing before the huge map, chewing the cigar, his

shoulders thrust back, and his hands clasped tightly behind him.

The young lieutenant climbed into our car. He explained that the general had delegated him to the party. He went with us through the trenches on succeeding days and said good-by only when we took the train for Paris. He was a brilliant young officer and before the war had been a foreign correspondent for *Le Temps*. For that great newspaper he had "covered" campaigns in Asia and Africa. Now he explained that he was to be official historian of the campaigns of General Foch.

"I am the latest comer on his staff," the lieutenant said, "so there was not much room for me and he has given me a holiday with you. He has not a large staff, but the house as you see is very little. So I have the room that a baby occupied before the war." The young man smiled and looked down at his stalwart frame. "There was only a little cot and a rocking horse in the room. I sleep on the floor. I shall keep the cot for the baby."

This conversation took place on the last day of our trip, amidst the ruins of Arras. The lieutenant talked continually of his general. He



explained how the general had told him in detail, and illustrated by making a plan with matches, the great movement of troops during the battle of the Marne that started the German retreat.

“The general broke all his own rules of war,” he explained; “all those rules that he taught so long in the *École de Guerre*. He moved an entire division—half of the famous Forty-second Corps, while it was under fire—he stretched out the remainder of the corps in a thin line across its place, and moved the division behind his entire army, then flung them against the Prussian Guard as it was beginning the attack on the center. The moving of troops already engaged with the enemy had never been done in any war before.”

“But he staked his whole reputation—his military career on it?” I asked.

The Lieutenant smiled. “Oh, yes,” he replied, “but after he gave the order, he went for a long walk in the country with a member of his staff, who told me afterwards that not once was the war mentioned, and they were gone three hours. All that time they talked about Spanish art and Spanish music. When they returned to headquarters, the general merely asked if there was any news, knowing well that perhaps he might hear news which would make his name hated for-

ever. He was told the tide had turned and we were winning the battle. He merely grunted and lighted a fresh cigar."

We all remained silent and then a number of desultory questions were asked about the position of the troops. The lieutenant again explained with matches. "The general showed it to me with matches, as I have already shown." He spoke reverently, his voice almost a whisper. "And I have those matches that the general used."

In Arras there was just one house left where we could take luncheon—a fine old mansion belonging to a friend of our guide from the Great General Staff. We brought our food and soldiers served it in a stately room with a massive beamed ceiling and stags' antlers decorating the walls. A tapestry concealed one wall. The officer pulled it aside to show that we sat in only half a room; the other half had been entirely destroyed by shells. From the cellar an orderly brought some of the finest burgundy in France. There was a piano in one corner of the room. When coffee was served, our Captain sat at the instrument and played snatches of Schubert, Mozart and Beethoven.

The discussion at the table turned to music.

At the same moment a shell burst a few hundred yards down the street.

"Play Wagner," some one asked.

A member of our party who had been in Russia said:

"Do you permit German music? In Russia it is forbidden."

The officer replied:

"How stupid! Things which are beautiful remain beautiful," and he played an air from "Tristan" as a shell went screaming overhead.

The young lieutenant, handsome and debonair, turned to me:

"This is fine," he said. "Here we are in the last house in Arras where this scene is possible, and perhaps to-morrow this place will all be gone—perhaps in ten minutes." He laughed and the piano was silenced by the explosion of another shell.

We climbed into our automobiles and hurried out of town along a road in plain sight of the German guns. I thought of what General Foch had said: "We can go through them any time we desire." I got out my military map and looked at the German line, slipping gradually from the plateau of Artois into the plain of Douai—the plain that contains Lens, Douai and

Lille and sweeps away across the frontier of Belgium. That was the place to which General Foch referred when he said the Germans "must keep on going away." I turned to an officer beside me in the car. I said: "When the French guns are sweeping that plain it means the end of the Germans in Northern France?" He smiled and nodded, while I offered a silent prayer that on that day I might be permitted by the military authorities to make my fourth visit to Artois, to see the decisive victory of French arms that I believe will take place there under the command of General Foch, and that will help largely to bring this war to a close.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE BATTLE OF THE LABYRINTH

THIS is a story about what, in the minds of the French military authorities, ranks as the greatest battle in the western theater of operations, following the battle of the Marne.

So far as I know the battle has never received an official name. The French *communiqués* have always vaguely referred to it as "operations in the sector north of Arras."

I cannot minutely describe the conflict; no one can do that now. I can, however, tell what I saw there when the Ministry of War authorized me to accompany a special mission there, to which I was the only foreigner accredited. I purpose to call this struggle the Battle of the Labyrinth, for "labyrinth" is the name applied to the vast system of entrenchments all through that region, and from which the Germans have been literally blasted almost foot by foot by an extravagant use of French melinite. This battle was of vital importance because a French defeat at the Labyrinth would allow the Germans to sweep clear

across Northern France, cutting off all communication with England.

The battle of the Labyrinth really began in October, 1914, when General de Maud'huy stopped the Prussian Guard before Arras with his motley array of tired territorials, whom he had gathered together in a mighty rush northward after the battle of the Marne. These crack Guards regiments afterward took on the job at Ypres, while the Crown Prince of Bavaria assumed the vain task of attempting to break de Maud'huy's resistance and cut a more southward passage to the sea.

All winter de Maud'huy worried him, not seeking to make a big advance, but contenting himself with the record of never having lost a single trench. With the return of warm weather, just after the big French advance in Champagne, this sector was chosen by Joffre as the place in which to take the heart out of his enemy by the delivery of a mighty blow.

The Germans probably thought that the French intended to concentrate in the Vosges, as next door to Champagne; so they carted all their poison gases there and to Ypres, where their ambition still maintains ascendancy over their good sense. But where the Germans think Joffre is



likely to strike is usually the place furthest from his thoughts. Activities in the Arras sector were begun under the personal command and direction of the Commander-in-Chief.

I doubt whether until the war is over it will be possible adequately to describe the battle, or rather, the series of battles extending along this particular front of about fifty miles. "Labyrinth" certainly is the fittest word to call it. I always had a fairly accurate sense of direction; but, it was impossible for me, standing in many places in this giant battlefield, to say where were the Germans and where the French, so confusing was the constant zigzag of the trenches. Sometimes when I was positive that a furious cannonade coming from a certain position was German, it turned out to be French. At other times, when I thought I was safely going in the direction of the French, I was hauled back by officers who told me I was heading directly into the German line of fire. I sometimes felt that the German lines were on three sides, and often I was quite correct. On the other hand, the French lines often almost completely surround the German positions.

One could not tell from the nearness of the artillery fire whether it was from friend or foe. Artillery makes three different noises; first, the

sharp report followed by detonations like thunder, when the shell first leaves the gun; second, the rushing sound of the shell passing high overhead; third, the shrill whistle, followed by the crash when it finally explodes. In the Labyrinth the detonations which usually indicated the French fire might be from the German batteries stationed close by but unable to get our range, and firing at a section of the French lines some miles away. I finally determined that when a battery fired fast it was French; for the German fire became more intermittent every day.

I shall try to give some idea of what this fighting looks like. Late one afternoon, coming out of a trench into a green meadow, I suddenly found myself backed against a mud-bank made of the dirt taken from the trenches. We were just at the crest of a hill. In khaki clothes I was of the same color as the mud-bank; so an officer told me I was in a fairly safe position.

Modern war becomes a somewhat flat affair after the first impressions have been dulled.

We blotted ourselves against our mud-bank, carefully adjusted our glasses, turned them toward the valley before us, whence came the sound of exploding shells, and watched a village dying in the sunset. It was only about a thousand yards

away—I didn't even ask whether it was in French or German possession. A loud explosion, a roll of dense black smoke, penetrated at once by the long, horizontal rays of sun, revealing tumbling roofs and crumbling walls. A few seconds' intermission; then another explosion; a public school in the main street sagged suddenly in the center. With no pause came a succession of explosions, and the building was prone upon the ground—a jagged pile of broken stones.

We turned our glasses on the other end of the village. A column of black smoke was rising where the church had caught fire. We watched it awhile in silence. Ruins were getting very common. I swept the glasses away from the hamlet altogether and pointed out over the distant fields to the left.

“Where are the German trenches?” I asked the Major.

“I'll show you—just a moment!” he answered, and at the same time signaling to a soldier squatting in the entrance to a trench near by, he ordered the man to convey a message to the telephone station, which connected with a “seventy-five” battery at our rear. I was on the point of telling the officer not to bother about it. The words were on my lips; then I thought: “Oh, never

mind! I might as well know where the trenches are, now that I have asked."

The soldier disappeared. "Watch!" said the officer. We peered intently across the fields to the left. In less than a minute there were two sharp explosions behind us, two puffs of smoke out on the horizon before us, about a mile away.

"That's where they are!" the officer said. "Both shells went right into them!"

Away to the right of the village, now reduced to ruins, was another larger village; we squared around on our mud bank to look at that. This town was more important; it was Neuville-Saint-Vaast, which was occupied by both French and Germans, the former slowly retaking it, house by house. We were about half a mile away. We could see little; for strangely, in this business of house-to-house occupation, most of the fighting is in the cellars. But I could well imagine what was going on, for I had already walked through the ruins of Vermelles, another town now entirely in French possession, but taken in the same fashion after two months' dogged inch-by-inch advances.

So, when, looking at Neuville-Saint-Vaast, I suddenly heard a tremendous explosion and saw a great mass of masonry and débris of all descriptions flying high in the air, I knew just what had

happened. The French—for it is always the French who do it—had burrowed, sapped and dug themselves laboriously, patiently, slowly, by tortuous, narrow underground routes from one row of houses under the foundations of the next row of houses. There they had planted mines. The explosion I had just witnessed was of a mine. Much of the débris I saw flying through space had been German soldiers a few seconds before.

Before the smoke died away we heard a savage yell. That was the French cry of victory; then we heard a rapid cracking of rifles. The French had evidently advanced across the space between the houses to finish the work of their mine. When one goes to view the work of these mines afterward all that one sees is a great round, smooth hole in the ground—sometimes 30 feet deep, often twice that in diameter. Above it might have been either a château or a stable; unless one has an old resident for guide it is impossible to know.

It takes many days and nights to prepare these mines. It takes correct mathematical calculation to place them. It takes morale, judgment, courage, and intelligence—this fighting from house to house. And yet the French are called a frivolous people!

A cry from a soldier warned us of a German

aeroplane directly overhead; so we stopped gazing at Neuville-Saint-Vaast. A French aeroplane soon appeared, and the German one made off rapidly. They usually do, as most German war planes are too light to carry anything but rifles and bombs; French machines, while slower, all have mitrailleuses. A fight between them is unequal, and the inequality is not easily overcome.

Four French machines were now circling above, and the German batteries opened fire on them. It was a beautiful sight. There was not a cloud in the sky, and the sun had not yet gone. We could not hear the shells explode, but little feathery white clouds suddenly appeared as if some giant invisible hand had just put them there—high up in the sky. Another appeared; then another. Several dozen little white clouds were vividly outlined against the blue before the French machines, all untouched, turned back to their own lines.

The soldier with us suddenly threw himself face down on the ground; a second after a German shell tore a hole in the field before us, less than a hundred yards away. I asked the officer if we had been seen, and if they were firing at us. He said he did not think so, but we had perhaps better move. As a matter of fact, they were hunt-



ing the battery that had so accurately shown us their trenches a short time before.

Instead of returning to the point where we had left our motors by the trench, we walked across an open field in a direction which I thought was precisely the wrong one. High above us, continually, was a rushing sound like giant wings. Occasionally, when a shell struck near us, we heard the shrill whistling sound, and half a dozen times in the course of the walk great holes were torn in our field. But artillery does not cause fear easily; it is rifles that accomplish that. The sharp hissing of the bullet resembles so much the sound of a spitting cat, seems so personal—as if it was intended just for you.

Artillery is entirely impersonal; you know that the gunners do not see you; that they are firing by arithmetic at a certain range; that their shell is not intended for any one in particular. So you walk on, among daisies and buttercups. You calculate the distance between you and the bursting shell. You somehow feel that nothing will harm you. You are not afraid; and if you are lucky, as we were, you will find the automobiles waiting for you just over there beyond the brow of the hill.

## CHAPTER XVI

### “WITH THE HONORS OF WAR”

It was just dawn when I got off a train at Gerbéviller, the little “Martyr City” that hides its desolation as it hid its existence in the foothills of the Vosges.

There was a dense fog. At 6 A. M. fog usually covers the valleys of the Meurthe and Moselle. From the station I could see only a building across the road. A gendarme demanded my credentials. I handed him the *laisser-passer* from the Quartier Général of the “First French Army,” which controls all coming and going, all activity in that region. The gendarme demanded to know the hour when I proposed to leave. I told him. He said it would be necessary to have the permit “viséd for departure” at the headquarters of the gendarmerie. He pointed to the hazy outlines of another building just distinguishable through the fog.

This was proof that the town contained buildings—not just a building. The place was not

entirely destroyed, as I had supposed. I went down the main street from the station, the fog enveloping me. I had letters to the town officials, but it was too early in the morning to present them. I would first get my own impressions of the wreck and ruin.

But I could see nothing on either hand as I stumbled along in the mud. So I commented to myself that this was not as bad as some places I had seen. I thought of the substantial station and the buildings across the road—untouched by war. I compared Gerbéviller with places where there is not even a station—where not even one house remains as the result of “the day when the Germans came.”

The road was winding and steep, dipping down to the swift little stream that twists a turbulent passage through the town. The day was coming fast but the fog remained white and impenetrable. After a few minutes I began to see dark shapes on either side of the road. Tall, thin, irregular shapes, some high, some low, but with outlines all softened, toned down by the banks of white vapor.

I started across the road to investigate and fell across a pile of jagged masonry on the sidewalk. Through the fog I could see tumbled piles of

bricks. The shapes still remained—specters that seemed to move in the light from the valley. An odor that was not of the freshness of the morning assailed me. I climbed across the walk. No wall of buildings barred my path, but I mounted higher on the piles of brick and stones. A heavy black shape was now at my left hand. I looked up and in the shadow there was no fog. I could see a crumbled swaying side of a house that was. The odor I noticed was that caused by fire. Sticking from the wall I could see the charred wood joists that once supported the floor of the second story. Higher, the lifting fog permitted me to see the waving boughs of a tree that hung over the house that was. At my feet, sticking out of a pile of bricks and stones, were the twisted iron fragments of a child's bed. I climbed out into the sunshine.

I was standing in the midst of a desolation and a silence that were profound. There was nothing there that lived, except a few fire-blackened trees that stuck up here and there in the shelter of broken walls. Now I understood the meaning of the spectral shapes. They were nothing but the broken walls of the other houses that were. They were all that remained of nine-tenths of Gerbéviller.

I wandered along to where the street turned

sharply. There the ground pitched straight to the little river. Half of a house stood there, unscathed by fire; it was one of those unexplainable freaks that often occur in great catastrophes. Even the window glass was intact. Smoke was coming from the chimney. I went to the opposite side and there stood an old woman looking out toward the river, brooding over the ruin stretching below her.

"You are lucky," I said. "You still have your home."

She turned a toothless countenance toward me and threw out her hands. I judged her to be well over seventy. It wasn't her home, she explained. Her home was "là-bas"—pointing vaguely in the distance. She had lived there fifty years—now it was burned. Her son's house, he had saved thirty years to be able to call it his own, was also gone; but then her son was dead, so what did it matter? Yes, he was shot on the day the Germans came. He was ill, but they killed him. Oh, yes, she saw him killed. When the Germans went away she came to his house and built a fire in the stove. It was very cold.

And why were the houses burned? No; it was not the result of bombardment. Gerbéviller was not bombarded until after the houses were burned.

They were burned by the Germans systematically. They went from house to house with their torches and oil and pitch. They did not explain why they burned the houses, but it was because they were angry.

The old woman paused a moment, and a faint flicker of a smile showed in the wrinkles about her eyes. I asked her to continue her story.

“You said because they were angry,” I prompted. The smile broadened. Oh, yes, they were angry, she explained. They did not even make the excuse that the villagers fired upon them. They were just angry through and through. And it was all because of those seventy-five French chasseurs who held the bridge.

Some one called to her from the house. She hobbled to the door. “Any one can tell you about the seventy-five chasseurs,” she said, disappearing within.

I went on down the road and stood upon the bridge over the swift little river. It was a narrow, tiny bridge only wide enough for one wagon to pass. Two roads from the town converged there, the one over which I had passed and another which formed a letter “V” at the junction with the bridge. Across the river only one road led away from the bridge and it ran straight up



a hill, when it turned suddenly into the broad national highway to Lunéville, about five miles away.

One house remained standing at the end of the bridge, nearest the town. Its roof was gone, and its walls bore the marks of hundreds of bullets, but it was inhabited by a little old man of fifty, who came out to talk with me. He was the village carpenter. His house was burned, so he had taken refuge in the little house at the bridge. During the time the Germans were there he had been a prisoner, but they forgot him the morning the French army arrived. Everybody was in such a hurry, he explained.

I asked him about the seventy-five chasseurs at the bridge.

Ah, yes, we were then standing on the site of their barricade. He would tell me about it, for he had seen it all from his house half way up the hill.

The chasseurs were first posted across the river on the road to Lunéville, and when the Germans approached, early in the morning, they fell back to the bridge, which they had barricaded the night before. It was the only way into Gerbéviller, so the chasseurs determined to fight. They had torn up the street and thrown great earthworks across

one end of the bridge. Additional barricades were thrown up on the two converging streets, part way up the hill, behind which they had mitrailleuses which could sweep the road at the other end of the bridge.

About a half mile to the south a narrow foot-bridge crossed the river, only wide enough for one man. It was a little rustic affair that ran through the grounds of the Château de Gerbéviller, which faced the river only a few hundred yards below the main bridge. It was a very ancient château, built in the twelfth century and restored in the seventeenth century. It was a royal château of the Bourbons. In it once lived the great François de Montmorency, Duc de Luxembourg and Marshal of France. Now it belonged to the Marquise de Lamberty, a cousin of the King of Spain.

I interrupted, for I wanted to hear about the chasseurs. I gave the little old man a cigarette. He seized it eagerly—so eagerly that I also handed him a cigar. He fondled that cigar for a moment and then placed it in an inside pocket. It was a very cheap and very bad French cigar, for I was in a part of the country that has never heard of Havanas, but to the little old man it was something precious. “I will keep it for Sunday,” he said.

I then got him back to the seventy-five chasseurs. It was just eight o'clock in the morning—a beautiful sunshiny morning—when the German column appeared around the bend in the road which we could see across the bridge, and which joined the highway from Lunéville. There were twelve thousand in that first column. One hundred and fifty thousand more came later. A band was playing “Deutschland über Alles,” and the men were singing. The closely-packed front ranks of infantry broke into the goose step as they came in sight of the town. It was a wonderful sight; the sun glistened on their helmets; they marched as though on parade right down almost to the opposite end of the bridge.

Then came the command to halt. For a moment there was a complete silence. The Germans, only a couple of hundred yards from the barricade, seemed slowly to consider the situation. The Captain of the chasseurs, from a shelter behind the very little house that was still standing—and where his men up the two roads could see him—softly waved his hand.

Crack-crack-crack-crack-crack-crack-crack-crack! The bullets from the mitrailleuses whistled across the bridge into the front ranks of the

"Deutschland über Alles" singers, while the men behind the bridge barricade began a deadly rifle fire.

Have you ever heard a mitrailleuse? It is just like a telegraph instrument, with its insistent clickety click-click-click, only it is a hundred times as loud. Indeed I have been told by French officers that it has sometimes been used as a telegraph instrument, so accurately can its operator reel out its hundred and sixty shots a minute.

On that morning at the Gerbéviller barricade, however, it went faster than the telegraph. These men on the converging roads just shifted their range slightly and poured bullets into the next ranks of infantry and so on back along the line, until Germans were dropping by the dozen at the sides of the straight little road. Then the column broke ranks wildly and fled back into the shelter of the road from Lunéville.

A half hour later a detachment of cavalry suddenly rounded the corner and charged straight for the barricade. The seventy-five were ready for them. Some of them got half way across the bridge and then tumbled into the river. Not one got back around the corner of the road to Lunéville.

There was another half hour of quiet, and then from the Lunéville road a battery of artillery got into action. Their range was bad, so far as any achievement against the seventy-five was concerned, so they turned their attention to the château, which they could easily see from their position across the river. The first shell struck the majestic tower of the building and shattered it. The next smashed the roof, the third hit the chapel—and so continued the bombardment until flames broke out to complete the destruction.

Of course the Germans could not know that the château was empty, that its owner was in Paris and both her sons fighting in the French army. But they had secured the military advantage of demolishing one of the finest country houses in France, with its priceless tapestries, ancient marbles and heirlooms of the Bourbons. A howl of German glee was heard by the seventy-five chasseurs crouching behind their barricades. So pleased were the invaders with their achievement that next they bravely swung out a battery into the road leading to the bridge, intending to shell the barricades. The Captain of chasseurs again waved his hand. Every man of the battery was killed before the guns were in position. It took an entire company of infantry—half of them being

killed in the action—to haul those guns back into the Lunéville road, thus to clear the way for another advance.

From then on until 1 o'clock in the afternoon there were more infantry attacks, all failing as lamentably as the first. The seventy-five were holding off the 12,000. At the last attack they let the Germans advance to the entrance of the bridge. They invited them with taunts to advance. Then they poured in their deadly fire, and as the Germans broke and fled they permitted themselves a cheer. Up to this time not one chasseur was killed. Only four were wounded.

Shortly after 1 o'clock the German artillery wasted a few more shells on the ruined château and the chasseurs could see a detachment crawling along the river bank in the direction of the narrow footbridge that crossed through the château park a half mile below. The Captain of the chasseurs sent one man with a mitrailleuse to hold the bridge. He posted himself in the shelter of a large tree at one end. In a few minutes about fifty Germans appeared. They advanced cautiously on the bridge. The chasseur let them get half way over before he raked them with his fire. The water below ran red with blood.

The Germans retreated for help and made



another attack an hour later with the same result. By 4 o'clock, when the lone chasseur's ammunition was exhausted, it is estimated that he had killed 175 Germans, who made five desperate rushes to take the position, which would have enabled them to make a flank attack on the seventy-four still holding the main bridge. When his ammunition was gone—which occurred at the same time as the ammunition at the main bridge was exhausted—this chasseur with the others succeeded in effecting a retreat to a main body of cavalry. If he still lives—this modern Horatius at the bridge—he remains an unnamed hero in the ranks of the French army, unhonored except in the hearts of those few of his countrymen who know.

During the late hours of the afternoon aeroplanes flew over the chasseurs' position, thus discovering to the Germans how really weak were the defenses of the town, how few its defenders. Besides the ammunition was gone. But for eight hours—from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon—the seventy-five had held the 12,000.

Had that body of 12,000 succeeded earlier the 150,000 Germans that advanced the next day might have been able to fall on the French right flank during a critical battle of the war. The total

casualties of the chasseurs were three killed, three captured, and six wounded.

The little old man and I had walked to the entrance of the château park before he finished his story. It was still too early for breakfast. I thanked him and told him to return to his work in the little house by the bridge. I wanted to explore the château at leisure.

I entered the place—what was left of it. Most of the walls were standing. Walls built in the twelfth century do not break easily, even with modern artillery. But the modern roof and seventeenth century inner walls were all demolished. Not a single article of furniture or decoration remained. But the destruction showed some of the same freaks—similar to that little house left untouched by fire on the summit of the hill.

For instance, the Bourbon coat of arms above the grand staircase was untouched, while the staircase itself was just splintered bits of marble. On another fragment of the wall there still hung a magnificent stag's antlers. Strewed about in the corners I saw fragments of vases that had been priceless. Even the remnants were valuable. In the ruined music room I found a piece of fresh, clean music (an Alsatian waltz), lying on the mantelpiece. I went out to the front of the build-

ing, where the great park sweeps down to the edge of the river. An old gardener in one of the side paths saw me. We immediately established cordial relations with a cigarette.

He told me how, after the chasseurs retreated beyond the town, the Germans—reduced over a thousand of their original number by the activities of the day—swept over the barricades of the bridge and into the town. Yes, the old woman I had talked with was right about it. They were very angry. They were ferociously angry at being held eight hours at that bridge by a force so ridiculously small.

The first civilians they met they killed, and then they began to fire the houses. One young man, half-witted, came out of one of the houses near the bridge. They hanged him in the garden behind the house. Then they called his mother to see. A mob came piling into the château headed by four officers. All the furniture and valuables that were not destroyed they piled into a wagon and sent back to Lunéville. Of the gardener who was telling me the story they demanded the keys of the wine cellars. No; they did not injure him. They just held him by the arms while several dozen of the soldiers spat in his face.

While the drunken crew were reeling about the

place, one of them accidentally stumbled upon the secret underground passage leading to the famous grottoes. These grottoes and the underground connection of the château were built in the fifteenth century. They are a half mile away, situated only half above ground, the entrance looking out on a smooth lawn that extends to the edge of the river. Several giant trees, the trunks of which are covered with vines, half shelter the entrance, which is also obscured by climbing ivy. The interior was one of the treasures of France. The vaulted ceilings were done in wonderful mosaic; the walls decorated with marbles and rare sea shells. In every nook were marble pedestals and antique statuary, while the fountain in the center, supplied from an underground stream, was of porphyry inlaid with mosaic.

The Germans looked upon it with appreciative eyes. But they were still very angry. Its destruction was a necessity of war. It could not be destroyed by artillery because it was half underground and screened by the giant trees. But it could be destroyed by picks and axes. A squad of soldiers was detailed to the job. They did it thoroughly. The gardener took me there to see. Not a scrap of the mosaic remained. The fountain was smashed to bits. A headless Venus and

a smashed and battered Adonis were lying prone upon the ground.

The visitors of the château and environs afterward joined their comrades in firing the town. Night had come. Also across the bridge waited the 150,000 reenforcements, come from Lunéville. The five hundred of the two thousand inhabitants who remained were herded to the upper end of the town near the station. That portion was not to be destroyed because the German General would make his headquarters there.

The inhabitants were to be given a treat. They were to witness the entrance of the hundred and fifty thousand—the power and might of Germany was to be exhibited to them. So while the flames leaped high from the burning city, reddening the sky for miles, while old men prayed, while women wept, while little children whimpered, the sound of martial music was heard down the street near the bridge. The infantry, packed in close formation, the red light from the fire shining on their helmets, were doing the goose step up the main street to the station—the great German army had entered the city of Gerbéviller with the honors of war.

## CHAPTER XVII

SISTER JULIE, CHEVALIER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR

A LITTLE round apple dumpling sort of woman in nun's costume was bobbing a curtsy to me from the doorway. In excited French she begged me to be seated. For I was "Monsieur l'Américain" who had come to visit Gerbéviller, the little community nestling in the foothills of the Vosges, that has suffered quite as much from Germans as any city, even those in Belgium. It was her "grand pleasure" that I should come to visit her.

I stared for a moment in amazement. I could scarcely realize that this plump, bobbing little person was the famous Sister Julie. I had pulled every wire I could discover among my acquaintances at the Foreign Office and the Ministry of War to be granted the privilege of making the trip into that portion of the forbidden "zone of military activity" where Sister Julie had made her name immortal. I carried a letter from one of the great officials of the Quai d'Orsay, addressed to the little nun in terms of reverence



that one might use toward his mother. He signed himself "Yours, with great affection," after craving that she would grant me audience. And there she was, with the letter still unopened in her hand, telling me how glad she was to see me.

I confess I expected a different type of woman. I thought a different type necessary to handle the German invaders in the fashion Sister Julie handled them at Gerbéviller. I imagined a tall, commanding woman—like Madame Macherez, Mayor of Soissons—would enter the little sitting room where I had been waiting that sunny morning.

In that little sitting room the very atmosphere of war is not permitted. There is too much close at hand, where nine-tenths of the city lies in ashes as a result of the German visit. So in that room there is nothing but comfort, peace and good cheer. Potted geraniums fill the window boxes, pretty chintz curtains cover the glass. Where bullets had torn furrows in the plaster and drilled holes in the woodwork the wounds were concealed as far as possible. It was hard to realize that the deep, rumbling roars that shook the house while we talked were caused by a Franco-German artillery duel only a few kilometers away.

The little woman drew out chairs from the cen-



SISTER JULIE IN THE DOOR OF HER HOSPITAL



ter table and we seated ourselves, she talking continuously of how glad she was that one from "that great America" should want to see her and know about her work. Ah! her work, there was still so much to do!

She got up and toddled to the window, drawing aside the chintz curtains. "Poor Gerbéviller!" she sighed as we looked out over the desolate waste of burned houses. "My poor, poor Gerbéviller!"

Tears stood in her brown eyes and fell upon the wide white collar of the religious order that she wore. She brushed them aside quickly and turned to the table, again all smiles and dimples. Yes! dimples, for although Sister Julie is small, she is undeniably plump. She has dimples in her cheeks and in her chin—chins I might say. She even has dimples on the knuckles of her hands, after the fashion of babies. Her face is round and rosy. Her voice low and mellow. She looks only about forty of her sixty years—a woman who seems to have taken life as something that is always good. Evil and Germans seem never to have entered her door.

Then I remembered what this woman had done; how all France is talking about her and is proud of her. How the President of the Republic went

to the little, ruined city, accompanied by the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, and a great military entourage, just to hang the jeweled cross of the Legion of Honor about her neck. I wondered what they thought when she bobbed her curtsy in the doorway.

For it took a war to distinguish this little woman from the crowd. Outside her order she was unknown before the Germans came to France. But it did not matter to her. She just went placidly and smilingly on her way—"doing the Lord's work," as she told me. Then the day arrived when the Germans came, and this little round apple dumpling woman blew up. That is just the way it was. I could tell it from the way her brown eyes flashed when she told the tale to me. She was angry through and through just from the telling. She just exploded when the Germans entered her front door. And then her name was written indelibly on the scroll of fame as one of the great heroines of the war.

The Germans wanted bread, did they?—such was the way the story began—well, what did they mean by coming to her for it? They burned the baker's shop, didn't they, on the way through the town? Well, how did they expect her to furnish them bread? Her bread was for her people.

Yes, she had a good supply of it. But the Germans could find their own bread.

The German officer pointed a revolver at her head. She reached out her hand and struck it from his grasp. Then she waved a plump finger under his nose. Her voice was no longer low and mellow. It was commanding and austere. How dared he point a revolver at her—a “*religieuse*,” a nun? He could get right out of her house, too,—and get out quick.

The officer’s heavy jaw dropped in astonishment. He backed his way along the narrow hall, not stopping to pick up his weapon, and kicking backward the file of soldiers that crowded behind him. At the door Sister Julie put a detaining hand on his shoulder.

“You are an officer,” she said—the man understood French perfectly. “Well, while your soldiers are setting fire to the town, you just tell them to keep out of this end of the street. This is my house; it is for me and the five Sisters with me. Now we have made it a hospital. You barbarians just keep out of here with your burning.”

Barbarians! The officer raised his fist to strike. Something that was not of heaven made Sister Julie’s eyes deadly black. The man lowered his fist, quailing. “The devil!” he said.



Yes, barbarians! She almost shouted the word at him—and it was quite understood that his men were not to burn the hospital or the houses adjoining.

The crowd cleared out of the house rapidly and the breadth of Sister Julie's form filled the doorway. It was night and the burning was progressing rapidly, the Germans methodically firing every house. Some soldiers came to the house next to the hospital, and broke open the door. Sister Julie left her position in the hospital doorway and advanced upon them.

"Go away from here," she ordered. "Don't you dare set that house afire. It is next to the hospital. If it burns the hospital will burn, too. So go away—your officers have said that you are not to burn this end of the street."

The soldiers gazed at her stupidly. She advanced upon them, waving her arms. Several, after staring a moment, suddenly made the sign of the cross, and the entire party disappeared down the street to continue their destruction elsewhere.

The little nun then left her post at the door. She went to see that her food supplies were safe. She had a conference with the other Sisters, and visited the beds of the thirteen wounded that the

house already contained. Six of the wounded were of the band of seventy-five chasseurs who had held the Gerbéviller bridge against the Germans—twelve thousand Germans for eight hours—until their ammunition gave out. The others were civilians who were shot when the Germans finally entered the town.

After visiting her wounded, Sister Julie went out the back door of the house accompanied by two of the Sisters. The three carried large clothes baskets, kitchen knives, and a hatchet. Through the gardens and behind the burning houses they passed down the hill to the part of the city near the river, which was already smoldering in ashes. They went into the ruined barns, where the cows and horses were all burned alive. I was shown a bleached white bone, a souvenir of one of the cows.

With the hatchet and knives they secured enough bones and flesh from the dead animals to fill the two great baskets. Then they climbed painfully up the hill, behind the burning buildings, to the back door of their home. Water was drawn from their well, and a great fire built in the old-fashioned chimney in the kitchen. The enormous kettle was filled with the water, the meat and the bones, and soon the odor from gal-

lons of soup penetrated the outer door to the street. Again a German officer headed a delegation into the hall.

"You have food here," he announced to Sister Julie.

"We have," she snapped back. She was very busy. She waved the butcher knife under his nose. She then told him that the soup was for the people of Gerbéviller and for her wounded. She expressed no regret that there would be none left for Germans.

The officer said that the twelve thousand who entered Gerbéviller that afternoon was the advance column. The main body, with the commissariat, was coming shortly. Meanwhile, they were hungry. They would take Sister Julie's supply. They would take it—eh? Take it? They would only do that over her dead body. Meanwhile, they would leave her kitchen instantly. They did—the butcher knife making ferocious passes behind them on their way to the door. Sister Julie was still doing her "work for the Lord."

She then ordered all the wash tubs filled with water and brought inside the hall. The fire was coming into the street. Dense smoke was everywhere. Even the Germans now seemed willing

to save that particular part of Gerbéviller. It was the portion near the railway station and the telegraph. A substantial building near the *gare* would make an excellent headquarters for their General, who was due to arrive shortly. The civilians (only a few of the 2,000 inhabitants remained) were all herded into a field just on the outskirts of the town. Sister Julie, with Sister Hildegarde, sallied forth with their soup, and fed them. The next day she would see that the Germans allowed them to come to the hospital for more.

When she returned, a number of soldiers who had discovered a wine cellar were reeling up the street. They stopped in front of the hospital, but turned their attention to the house opposite. They would burn it. It had evidently been forgotten. They broke into the place, and in a moment flames could be seen through the lower windows.

Sister Julie called to the soldiers. They stared at her from the middle of the road. She motioned for them to come to her. They came. She told them to follow her into the hall. There she showed them the wash tubs full of water. They were to carry those tubs across the street and put out the fire they had started, and which

would endanger the hospital. This was according to orders given by the officers. After putting out the fire they were to bring the tubs back and refill them from the well in the back yard. The work was too heavy for the Sisters.

When these orders were obeyed, Sister Julie carried a little camp chair to the front steps and began a vigil that lasted all night long and half the next day. She saw the great German army of a hundred and fifty thousand march by, the band playing "Deutschland über Alles," the infantry doing the goose step as they passed the burning houses. Four times during the night the tubs of water in the hall were emptied and refilled when the flames crept close to her house.

At dawn next morning four officers approached her where she sat upon the doorstep. One of them informed her that, inasmuch as she was concealing French soldiers with arms inside the house, they intended to make a search.

"You are telling a lie," she informed them calmly, and did not budge. Two of the officers drew revolvers. Sister Julie sniffed contemptuously. The first officer again spoke. But his tone altered. It was less bumptious. He said that, inasmuch as the house had been spared the flames, at least an investigation was necessary.

Sister Julie arose and started inside. The officers stopped her. Two of them would lead the way. The other two would follow. The pair, with drawn revolvers, entered first and tiptoed cautiously down the hall. Then came the little nun. The second pair drew poniards and brought up the rear. She directed them to the rooms on the first floor, the sitting room, dining room and the kitchen, where Sister Hildegarde was busy over the fire. Then they went upstairs to the beds of the wounded. The first officer insisted that the covers be drawn back from each bed to make sure that the occupants were really wounded. Sister Julie remained silent at the door. As they turned to leave, she said with sarcasm, but with dignity: "You have seen. You know that I have spoken the truth. We are six Sisters of Mercy. Our work is to care for the sick. We will care for your German wounded, as well as our French. You may bring them here."

That morning the invaders began battle with the French, who had finished their entrenchments some kilometers on the other side of the town. At night the Germans accepted Sister Julie's invitation, and brought two hundred and fifty-eight wounded to her house. They completely filled the place. They were placed in rows in the



sitting room, the dining room, and the hall. They were even in the kitchen and in the attic. The weather was fine and they were stretched in rows in the garden. The few other houses undestroyed by fire were also turned into hospitals, and for fourteen days Sister Julie and her five assistants scarcely slept. They just passed the time giving medicine and food and nursing wounds. By the fourteenth day, the French had made a considerable advance and were dropping shells into the town, so the Germans decided to take away their own wounded.

During all this time daily rations were served to the civilian survivors, on orders secured by Sister Julie at the German headquarters. The civilians were ill-treated, but they were fed. Sister Julie gave me concrete instances of outrage. Many were killed for no reason whatever; some were sent as hostages to Germany. During fourteen days they were herded in the field. Afterward ten were found dead, with their hands manacled. Sister Julie told me one instance of an old woman, a paralytic, seventy-eight years old, who was taken out in an automobile to show the various wine cellars among the neighboring farms. The old woman had not been out of her house for years and did not know the wine cellars.

So the Germans killed her. Sister Julie went out at night and found her body. She and Sister Hildegarde buried it.

On the morning of the fifteenth day, the battle was fiercer than ever. The French had taken a hill near the outskirts, and mitrailleuse bullets frequently whistled through the streets. Several times they entered the windows of Sister Julie's house and buried themselves in the walls. But none of the Sisters was hurt.

There was a lull in the fighting for the next few days. The French were very busy at something—the Germans knew not what. They became more insolent than ever, and drank of the wine they had stored at the *gare*. In the ruins of the church they found the grilled iron strong box, where the priest, who had been sent to Germany as a hostage, had locked up the golden communion vessels, afterward giving the key to Sister Julie. The lock was of steel, and very old and strong. They tried to break it, but failed. They came to Sister Julie for the key, and she sent them packing. "I lied to them," she said softly. "I told them I didn't have the key."

Through the grilled iron of the box the soldiers could see the vessels. They were of fine gold, and very ancient. They were given to the

church in the fifteenth century by René, Duc de Lorraine and King of Jerusalem. The strong box was riveted to the foundations of the church with bands of steel and could not be carried away. They shot at the lock, to break it. But it did not break. Instead the bullets penetrated the box, a half dozen tearing ragged holes in the vessels. The wine finally became of greater interest than the gold, and the soldiers went away. That night Sister Julie went alone into the ruins of the church, opened the box, and took the vessels out.

She paused in her story, got up from her chair, and unlocked a cabinet in the wall. From it she brought the vessels wrapped in a white cloth. I took the great golden goblet in my hands and saw the holes of the German bullets. Sister Julie sat silent, looking out through the chintz curtains into the street. Then she smiled.

She was thinking of the eighth morning after the wounded had been taken away. That was the happiest morning of her life, she told me. At 5 o'clock that morning, just after daybreak, Sister Hildegarde had come to her bed to tell her that the Germans stationed near the *gare* in that part of the town all seemed to be going to the

ruined part, near the river, in the opposite direction from the French. A few minutes later Sister Julie got up and looked from the window. Then she almost fell down the stairs in her rush to get out of doors. About fifty yards up the street was a watering trough. Seated on horseback before that trough, watering their animals, laughing and smoking cigarettes, were six French dragoons.

"I cried at the blessed sight of them," she said. "They sat there, so gay, so debonair, as only Frenchmen know how to sit on horses." Sister Julie hurried to them. They smiled at her and saluted as she approached.

"But do you know the Germans are here?" she anxiously inquired. "You may be taken prisoners."

"Oh, no, we won't," they answered in chorus. "There are thirty thousand more of us just behind—due here in about two minutes. The whole French army is on the advance."

Then came thirty thousand. After the thirty thousand came more thousands. All that day the street echoed to the feet of marching Frenchmen. Their faces were dark and terrible when they saw what the Germans had done. Most of the day

Sister Julie sat on her doorstep and wept for joy. Since that morning not a German has been seen in Gerbéviller.

Sister Julie ceased her story and wiped the tears that had been running in streams down her cheeks. We heard the rattle of a drum outside the window. It was the signal of the town crier with news for the population. Sister Julie opened the window and looked out. It was the announcement of the meeting to be held that afternoon, a meeting that she had arranged for discussion of plans for rebuilding the town. Five hundred of the population had returned. There was so much work to do. The streets must be cleared of the débris. The sagging walls must be torn down and new buildings erected. It would be done quickly, immediately almost; aid was forthcoming from many quarters. The new houses would be better than the old. The streets were to be wide and straight, not narrow and crooked. Gerbéviller was to arise from her ashes modern and improved. And only a few miles away the cannon still roared and thundered.

I asked her about the Cross of the Legion of Honor given her by President Poincaré. I asked why she did not wear it. A pleased flush deepened the color in her rosy cheeks. I shall



always remember the grace and dignity of her answer.

"I do not wear it because it was not meant for me alone," she said. "It was given to the women of France who have done their duty."

"Not the little red ribbon of the order," I persisted. "You should pin that on your dress."

But Sister Julie shook her head. She is a "religieuse," she explained. Nuns do not wear decorations. They are doing the work of the Lord.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SILENT CANNON

ON a hill commanding a valley stretching away toward the Rhine is a dense pine forest. From its edge I looked far across the frontier of Germany.

In a little clearing a French artillery Major came to meet me and my guide. Then we walked for miles, it seemed, through dense shade over paths thick with needles, until we came upon an artillery encampment. From the conversation between my guide—a Captain of the General Staff—and the artillery Major I learned that we were about to see something new in cannon.

I am always eager to see something new in cannon. Since my visit to the great factories at Le Creusot, when I was permitted to cable carefully censored descriptions of the new giant guns France was preparing against Germany, I have always been looking for these guns in operation. So, when I saw that here was no ordinary battery, I began the molding of phrases to use in cabling

my impressions. I did not realize then that I was to have the most poignant illustration since the war began of the mighty fundamental differences between the Teutonic and Latin civilizations.

On a gentle slope, where the tops of pine trees below came up level with the brow of the hill, there was a great excavation, such as might have been dug for the foundations of a château. The front part, facing the valley, was all screened with barricades and covered with evergreens.

We entered the excavation from the rear, down winding steps lined on either side with towering trees. These steps were all concrete, as was also the entire bottom of the excavation. The air was very fresh and cool as we descended. Up above the breeze gently swayed the trees, which closed over us so densely, dimming the daylight. I was reminded of a dairy I knew on an up-State farm in New York. I almost looked for jars of butter in the dim recess of the cool concrete cellar. I could almost catch the odor of fresh milk.

But in the center of our cavern was a huge piece of mechanism that I recognized as the "something new in cannon." Above the great steel base the long, ugly barrel stretched many yards through an aperture in front, and was covered over with evergreens. The Major described the gun in de-

tail—its size, range and weight of its projectiles.

I walked to the front of the aperture to look at the barrel lying horizontally on the tops of the pine trees growing on the slope below. The branches had been carefully cut from the higher trees to give a view over the valley. I got out my field glasses and fixed them on the horizon many miles away—just how many miles away I am also not allowed to say. For a long time I studied that horizon just where it melted into mist. Then the sun's rays brightened it, and I could see more clearly.

"Looks like a city out there," I said aloud.

"It is," said the artillery Major behind me.

I looked again and could dimly make out what appeared to be the spires of churches.

"Look a little to the right; you can see a much larger building over there," the Major said.

I looked, and a huge gray mass loomed out of the mist.

"That's a cathedral," he said.

I put the glasses down and walked around to the open breech of the giant cannon, the mechanism of which another officer was explaining. He gave a lever a twist, and the huge barrel slowly moved from right to left over the tops of the pine trees.

The officer was saying in answer to a question:

"No, we are quiet now. We are just waiting."

"Waiting for what?" I asked.

"Oh, just waiting until everything is ready."

"Then what will you do?"

"Oh, destroy the forts, I hope. This fellow ought to account for several," and he patted the side of the barrel.

"Will you destroy the city?" I asked.

"What for?" he asked. "What good would that do? If we expect to occupy a city we do not want it destroyed. Besides,"—he shrugged his shoulders expressively—"we are not Germans."

I walked up to the gun and stared into the breech. I adjusted my glasses again and through them looked down the barrel. Out on the horizon I could see the huge gray mass that the Major said was a cathedral. The gun was trained directly upon it—this silent gun.

"It could hit that cathedral now," I thought to myself. Then I thought of the Cathedral of Rheims. Again I stared through the glasses into the barrel of the gun. The light was better now, and the tops of the spires were visible above the bulky gray mass.

It was the Cathedral of Metz.

## CHAPTER XIX

### D'ARTAGNAN AND THE SOUL OF FRANCE

I MET d'Artagnan in a forest of Lorraine. Perhaps Athos, Porthos and Aramis were there too, somewhere in the shadows. I saw only d'Artagnan and talked with him as long as it takes to tell the story. I had forgotten how he looked to Dumas père, but I knew him at once by his bearing and his spirit. His swashbuckling manners are just as arrogantly gay now in the forest of Lorraine and in the trenches of the Vosges as they were long ago in old Paris and on the highroad. He swaggers just as buoyantly with the "poilus" of the Republic as with the musketeers of the Cardinal.

D'Artagnan is a captain now; when I met him he was attached to the staff of a General of Brigade. He is always your beau ideal of a man. He looks just what he is—a fine French soldier.

My first glimpse of him was from the automobile in which I was riding with an officer from the Great General Staff whose business it was to con-

duct press correspondents to the front. D'Artagnan was walking towards us on the lonely forest road, and signaled with a long alpenstock for our driver to stop. He wore the regulation blue uniform, with the three gold stripes of a captain on his sleeve. He had no sword. I find that swords are no longer the fashion with the "working officers" at the front. They are in the way.

Our car slid to a stop. D'Artagnan's free hand came to salute. It was an imposing salute—one that only d'Artagnan could have made. His heels snapped together with a gallant click of spurs; his arm swept up in a semi-circle from his body; his rigid fingers touched the visor of his steel helmet—one of the new battle helmets, very light, strong and painted horizon blue to match the uniform. The chin strap was of heavy black leather instead of the brass chain of ante-bellum parade helmets.

D'Artagnan, from the center of the road, roared out his name and mission. His name, in his present reincarnation, is known throughout the French army, in fact throughout France. It is known to the Germans too, but correspondents are not permitted to give the names of their officers until the war is over. Anyway I immediately recognized him as d'Artagnan.



His mission, announced with gusto, was to guide us along the lines held by his brigade. He leaped to our running-board and ordered our chauffeur to advance.

He was an impressive figure, even clinging to the side of the jolting car. His body lithe and powerful; his hands lean and strong; his face, under the visor of the helmet, was d'Artagnan's own. A forehead high and bronzed. Eyes blue and both merry and ferocious. Cheeks high but rounded. His hair, only a little of it showing under the helmet, was black, but just enough grizzled to proclaim him in middle age. His mustache—it was a mustache of dreams and imagination—his mustache stuck out inches beyond the cheeks, and was wondrously twisted and curled.

His medals proved him the survivor of many hard campaigns. Most officers when at the front wear only the ribbons of their decorations, if they have any, and leave the medals at home. But not d'Artagnan. He wore all of his medals, in a blazing row across his chest. And he had all that were possible for any man in his position to win. First came the African Colonial medal, then the medal for service in Indo-China. Next was the Médaille de Maroc. In the center was

the Legion of Honor and then the Croix de Guerre, with four stars affixed, indicating the number of times during the present war, d'Artagnan has been mentioned in despatches for courage under fire. Finally came the only foreign medal—the Russian Cross of St. George—given by the Czar during the present war to a very few Frenchmen, and only “for great bravery.”

As d'Artagnan again stopped the car and we climbed out into the road, which had narrowed to a forest path, my companion pointed to the medals.

“Our captain is a professional soldier, you see,” he said. “He has fought all his life—didn’t just come back when his class was called for this war.”

But I already knew that. How could d'Artagnan be anything but a soldier—a professional, if you please—but fighting for the love of it, and the glory?

He tramped along in front of us, the spurs of his high boots jingling, and twirling the ends of his fierce mustaches. I glimpsed soldiers through the trees. Some came out to the path and saluted. To all d'Artagnan returned a salute with the same wonderful joy in it, as though it were the first salute of the day, or as if he were

passing a general. There was the same swing outward of the arm, the same rigid formality of bringing his hand to the helmet. The pomposity of the salute he may have learned from Porthos, but the dignity, the impressiveness of it, belonged to d'Artagnan.

His soldiers adored him; we could see that as we followed. Their eyes smiled and approved. And the stamp of great admiration was in their faces.

"They would go through hell with him," said my companion. "A good many of them have. He is the favorite of his brigade."

"He ought to be," I replied. "He is d'Artagnan."

"D'Artagnan!" my companion cried. "Why, so he is. I never thought of it. But he is d'Artagnan—alive and fighting."

He was a little distance ahead of us, among the trees. A sergeant approached him to make a report. D'Artagnan leaned back grandly on one leg, his chest forward, his chin tilted up, his hand, as usual, twisting the mustachios.

"He loves it," I said. "He loves everything about it—this war. When peace comes his life will lose its savor."

My officer of the Great General Staff nodded;

d'Artagnan returned jauntily, swinging his stick, and in ringing tones told us all that he had arranged for us to see.

We followed him through a program that has been described many times by correspondents since the war began—the encampments, the batteries and the trenches. But never before did a correspondent have such a guide. It was not my first trip to the front; but d'Artagnan led me into advanced trenches, closer to the Germans than I had ever been before. We crawled on hands and knees and spoke in whispers. But I was fascinated because d'Artagnan, just as Dumas might have shown him, crawled ahead, waved his hand in quick, impatient gestures for us to hurry, looked back to laugh and point through a loophole to great rents in the wire entanglements showing where a recent German attack had failed.

Only once, at a point where a road separated two trench sections, and always dangerous because of German snipers, did he order us to pass around behind in the safety of a boyau or communication trench. *He* leaped across the barrier with a derisive yell of triumph and a catlike quickness too astonishing to draw the German fire.

Otherwise he let us take far bigger chances than usually permitted visitors—and he made us like them. We squinted carelessly through risky loopholes because d'Artagnan did it first. We talked aloud because he did, and at times when ordinary guides would have made us keep silent. He stood up on a trench ledge and looked through a periscope, then jumped down laughing, holding out the periscope to show where a bullet had drilled a hole on the side only a few inches above his head. It was a game of follow the leader, and we followed because the leader was d'Artagnan.

"They will get him some day—he takes such chances," an officer remarked.

"They haven't got him yet and he has had more war than any of us," another replied.

On our way back, behind the line encampments, we met several soldiers carrying tureens of soup. D'Artagnan halted them, solemnly lifted the covers and tasted the contents. Then he passed the spoon to us.

"It is good," he pronounced, and patted the soldiers on the back, as we hurried on.

He now took us to his own quarters, in a dense grove of pines. His house was of pine boughs, half above and half underground, with a bomb-proof cavern at the rear. Its furniture was a

deal table and a bed of straw. We sat around on camp stools and an orderly brought in tea.

D'Artagnan then changed the subject for a few minutes from war. He had visited nearly all the world, including America. He turned to me, and to my surprise spoke in English. It was a very peculiar English, but it was not funny coming from the lips of d'Artagnan. He told me about his trip to America—how he did not have much money at the time, so he went as a lecturer to the French Societies in the big cities of the United States. It was hard to picture this big, weather-beaten soldier in such a rôle, until he told me the subject of his lecture. It was "The Soul of France"—always the Soul of France, a soul chivalrous, grand and unconquerable, that would forever make the world remember and expect.

In Boston he had tried to speak in English, at the Boston City Club. He pronounced the letter "i" in city, as in the word "site." He told me the lecture in English was very funny. Perhaps it was; but the Boston City Club had not seen their lecturer in the forest of Lorraine. They did not know that he was d'Artagnan.

After tea he showed us the park made by his soldiers in front of his "villa," as the semi-underground hut was called. A sign painted on



a tree announced the "Parc des Braves." Little well-groomed paths wound among the pine needles; rustic seats were built about the trees. A dozen little beds of mountain flowers made gay stars and crescents that would not have disgraced the Tuileries. The "Parc des Braves" had even an aviary, made of wire netting (left over from the barricades) built about a tree. D'Artagnan proudly pointed out a great owl and a cowering cuckoo in different compartments of this unique cage.

But the chef d'œuvre of the Parc was the reconstructed tableau of one of the brigade's heroic episodes. A tiny rustic bridge spanned a miniature brook; beside the brook was built a mill and beyond was an old farm-house and orchard. Seven tiny French chasseurs, of wood and painted blue, were holding the bridge against a horde of wooden Germans painted gray.

On a great tree shading this story of a glorious hour in the history of his "little braves," d'Artagnan had fixed a wooden slab, telling its details in verse.

"Il y avait sept petits chasseurs  
Qui ne connaissaient pas la peur."  
(There were seven little chasseurs  
Who knew no fear.)

That is the way the story began; and each verse began and ended with the same words. I wish I could have copied it all; but d'Artagnan, the author, was impatient to move on.

So we left the Parc and followed into the gloom of the forest and up the steep slope of the mountain. It faced the enemy's trenches. From the top one could look across the frontier of Germany.

D'Artagnan was silent now, plunging along through the deepening twilight. Suddenly we emerged on the edge of a clearing still bright with sunshine: a clearing perhaps several hundred feet square, lying on the steep hillside almost at an angle of about forty-five degrees.

D'Artagnan stopped, took off his helmet, then walked slowly into the open. We took off our hats and followed him.

The clearing was a military cemetery—it held the graves of d'Artagnan's dead. A tall white wooden cross at the top rose almost to the tops of the pines growing above it. On the cross-piece was written:

“To our comrades of the —th Brigade, killed by the enemy.”

At the foot of the great cross, stretched in military alignment over the clearing were hundreds of graves headed by little crosses. So

abrupt was the slope the dead soldiers stood almost erect—facing Germany. Narrow graveled walks separated them, and on each cross hung festoons of flowers kept always fresh by the comrades who remained.

We followed d'Artagnan across the silent place and stood behind him as he faced, with bared head, the great cross. He made the sign of the cross upon his breast. There was not a bowed head: we all lifted them high to read the words written there.

No one spoke; the wind rustled softly in the tops of the pines that pressed so densely about us. It was dark among the trees, but the clearing was still mellow with the fading sunlight.

"The sun always comes here first in the morning," d'Artagnan said softly, "and this is the last place from which it goes."

He swung around with his back to the great cross and flung out his alpenstock in a gesture that swept the valley before us. His voice rose harshly:

"Over there is the enemy," he thundered. "Those who rest here look at them face to face!"

His arm dropped; his voice sank.

"They didn't get over there. But their souls

remain here always to urge us and to point the way which we must go."

He stopped and seemed to listen. The wind had died; even the tree tops were still. The sun had gone; the dark began to sweep up over the graves. D'Artagnan leaned upon his alpenstock; his eyes were closed.

We did not stir, nor hardly breathe. D'Artagnan was in communion with the soul of his beloved France.





PART FIVE

THREE CHAPTERS IN CONCLUSION





## CHAPTER XX

### A REARPOST OF WAR

AFTER a year or more of war, even a latter-day war correspondent who gets a personally restricted war office Cook's tour to the front semi-occasionally, may yearn for peace. This is especially true in the case of a regular correspondent with the French army, because to France there come so many senators, statesmen and "molders of neutral opinion," bearing letters from President, King or Prelate, that the regular correspondent has hard work to edge in even his legitimate number of tours.

One morning I awoke early, far from the firing line, safe in my Paris flat. Before breakfast I read the hotel arrivals listed in the newspaper. The names of several molders were there. I knew that all their letters stated definitely what whales they were. I knew that the tour directors would not be able to resist them and that my seat in the next front-going limousine would probably be held in another name. So in the words of the

ancient British music-hall classic I decided that "I didn't like war and all that sort of thing."

Twelve hours later I was standing on an old stone jetty that runs out to meet the forty-foot tides on the north coast of Brittany. It was as far away as I could get and still retain an official connection as correspondent with the French army. The tiny hamlet at the end of the jetty has an official name. The name does not matter. There is no railroad, no post office, no telegraph. But the place is known because it was there that Pierre Loti wrote his great story of the Iceland Fisherman. There was nothing to disturb the thoughts, nothing to jar the nerves. All was quiet and peace; of war there was not the slightest suspicion.

The water at the end of the jetty was thirty feet deep, but so clean that one could see through it as through air. I watched a crab waddle along the bottom and disappear under a rock. Then I got out my army glasses and swept the coast. For miles tremendous headlands stuck out in the sea, rolling over treacherous rocks. Before me was the Ile de Bréhat, the ancient home of the pirates, which thrusts an arm far out into the Atlantic—an arm that holds a lighthouse to tell

mariners returning from Iceland that they are almost home.

Between the island and the mainland the outgoing tide swirled along at a rate of twelve sea miles per hour. I turned the glasses to the coast where the tiny Breton stone cottages were tucked behind rocks and hills that shelter them from storms and the long and terrible winter. Now they were bowers of color; clusters of roses and geraniums bloomed on garden walls, tall hollyhocks stood sentinel before the doors.

I dropped the glasses and sighed contentedly. Here I had found peace.

Near the old stone jetty a man was swimming. Suddenly he sat bolt upright on the water. His legs spread straight before him and his hands flapped idly at little waves. Occasionally he tugged at a long drooping walrus mustache, then rubbed the salt spray from his lips. He was a long angular individual and from my position on the jetty he appeared to be entirely unclad.

"He is sitting on the top of a rock that is flooded at high tide," some one near me remarked. As the words were spoken, the bather flopped from his place and swam toward us. He was puffing heavily when he grasped the stone side

of the jetty and pulled himself up. I then saw that I was mistaken as to his nudity, for he wore the strangest bathing costume that I had ever beheld. It consisted of white cotton trunks about eight inches wide. On one side, embroidered in yellow silk was a vision of the rising sun; skin tight against the other side was a blue pansy.

I was fascinated, and watched the man trudge up the winding road that led from the jetty. A ray of the lowering sun flashed on the embroidered pansy rapidly drying against his flanks as he disappeared in the doorway of a cottage. I turned to an old fisherman who was puttering about a sail boat:

"It looks Japanezy, that bathing suit," I said. The old man puffed at his pipe: "No; his wife made it," he replied. "He wrote to her that he had learned to swim so she made it and sent it up to him. He had never seen the ocean before he came here. He is from the Midi."

"Ah," I replied, "and what did he wear before she sent it?"

The old man shrugged his shoulders. "About here, you know, it doesn't much matter about bathing suits. There aren't many folks about."

"Who is he?" I asked. "Is he a summer visitor?"



"Summer visitor!" the old man gasped. "Summer visitor—why he hates this place and everything in it. He only learned to swim because he had nothing else to do and because he hates it so."

"Hates it!" I ejaculated. "Well, why on earth is he here then?"

"He's here because he's got to be here," the old chap replied. "He's mobilized here. He's a soldier!"

A cigarette that I had just taken from its case, fell from my nerveless fingers into the water and swirled out with the tide.

A soldier—a soldier in my retreat. How unspeakably annoying. And in that bathing suit I never would have suspected him at all.

The old fisherman explained, while I lugubriously leaned over the jetty and watched that crab puddling about his rock. There were eleven more of them—soldiers, I mean—they all lived in the little cottage near the jetty. They were there to guard the cable between the mainland and the Ile de Bréhat, two miles away. They guarded it the twenty-four hours of the day—those twelve. Every two hours one of them mounted guard where the cable comes up from the sea and solemnly guarded it from German attack.



The old fisherman pointed behind me. I turned and there, even as he had explained, I saw a man in the blue coat and red pants of the French territorial army. From the trenches the red pants have gone into the historic past. Nowadays the red pants are only for the territorials.

This particular cable sentry was also from the Midi, my fisherman explained. He too disliked the sea. He sat there and stared moodily into the sun that was just in the act of gloriously descending into the water. A last ray caught the steel bayonet of the Lebel rifle lying across his knees.

I left the jetty and walked up the winding road to the village. I went to the single store to buy tobacco and to hear the talk of the people. There were no newspapers, I thought, so their talk could not be about the war. Also there I would avoid the sight of the soldiers, because the store had liquor on its list of commodities. It is forbidden to soldiers to enter such places except at certain hours.

A fresh-faced Breton girl served out the tobacco. Cigars at two cents each were the most expensive tobacco purchase in the shop. I purchased a dozen and immediately became a celebrity and a millionaire. We talked. I asked her about

the countryside, about the people and about the wonderful lace coiffures of the peasant women. She told me how the women of one hamlet wear an entirely different "coif" from those even of the neighboring farms and that throughout Brittany there are hundreds of different styles.

Then I asked her about the men folks, the few who work in the fields and the great majority who go off in the boats to Iceland in the spring and come back ten months later—those who ever do come back at all. Then quite naturally we talked about the war. For she explained that to her people the war was not so terrible as the times of peace. Then it was impossible to get letters from a fishing schooner off the Iceland banks—now it was quite easy to get letters from the trenches every few days. The men suffered far greater losses from the perils of the northern ocean than since they were all mobilized to fight the Germans. Some were killed—that was natural enough—but not half so many as the number who just sailed out and disappeared.

I was beginning to feel that perhaps the war was a benefit to this part of the world.

An old woman entered the store to buy tobacco. She was bent and withered and her hand trembled as she drew the few coppers from her purse. Her

voice was high and quavery when she spoke to the girl. She said that her son had just been wounded near Verdun. His condition was desperate, but they were bringing him home—to her—to die on the old Brittany farm, on the hillside overlooking the sea.

“Ah, la guerre,” she murmured, “c’est terrible.”

She explained that her other boys had been lost on a fishing schooner five years ago. She had tried to keep this one—had wanted him so much and tried so hard. But if she could see him again it would be better. She sighed and tucked purse and tobacco under her apron and clattered out on her heavy wooden sabots—her head bowed under her years and her woe. “C’est pour la patrie,” she murmured as she passed through the door.

The next day was a Sunday. On Sunday all Brittany goes to church, and when one is in Brittany—well, one goes to church too. After the service I walked through the churchyard, which is also the graveyard of the village. It was so quiet, so restful and far removed from the world and the war, that I was content to remain there, for the eleven soldiers not guarding the cable were disporting themselves on the beach.

I found a wonderful old wall at one end of the

graveyard. It was very old and overgrown with moss and ivy. It was a dozen feet high and crumbling in places. I did not know then that the wall was one of the sights of that countryside, but I did know when I saw it that I was looking upon the record of mighty tragedies. For it was covered over with little slabs, sometimes almost lost to view under the climbing vines. On the slabs were written the names of the men of the village who had gone to sea and never been heard of again. The dates were all there and the names of the ships. On several were the names of two or more brothers—on another slab were listed the males of three generations of one house. There were hundreds of names, the dates going back nearly a hundred years. Over many slabs with more recent dates were hung wreaths of flowers.

It is called the wall of the disappeared.

I read all the slabs with keenest interest; this record of toll taken by an element more resistless even than war. Indeed the battles of the nations seemed puny against the evidences of inexorable might written on the wall of the disappeared.

Near the end of the wall a woman was praying. She was all in black, with the huge Breton widow's cowl drawn over her head, so that she looked like

a witch in Macbeth. Above her head I noticed a freshly painted slab newly fixed in the wall. I read the inscription over her shoulder. The date was September, 1915. Instead of the name of a fishing boat that went to pieces in a gale off Iceland, was recorded the man's regiment, followed by his name and the words, "disappeared in the battle of the Marne."

The morning following I awoke early, with the sun and the sea sparkling at my window. I got into a regulation bathing suit and rushed down the old stone jetty for a plunge before breakfast. The water was so fresh—so full of life—the day was so wonderful—that I forgot all about the twelve soldiers, the old woman whose wounded son was coming home to die, the soldier of the battle of the Marne whose name was on the wall of the disappeared.

There was no such thing as war as I dived off the jetty's end, deep into the cold, clean water. I opened my eyes under the water and could see the rocks on the bottom, still many feet below.

Suddenly a roar struck my ears and I struck up to the surface. I knew how sound travels under water; and I knew this sound. It was a dull, terrifying boom. I rubbed the salt from my eyes and looked across the straits to the Ile de

Bréhat. Crouched under the towering rocks of the island, and lying low in the water, was an ugly black torpedo destroyer flying the tricolor. A cruiser flying the Union Jack, her masts just visible across a far reach of the island, was picking her way slowly through the channel. The sound was a signal gun.

I floated on the water and looked up at the sky. Up there, perhaps, is peace, I thought; and then I glanced hastily about for aeroplanes.

As for this village, my thoughts continued, this insignificant village of L'Arcouëst, par Ploubazlanec, Côtes du Nord, Brittany—that is the sonorous official address of my tiny hamlet by the sea—why even if it is not in the “zone of military activity,” it has all the elements that war brings, from the faded uniforms of blue and red to the black mouths of cannon. It has all the anxiety, all the sorrow, all the hopes and all the prayers. It has all the zeal and all the despair. All the horror and all the pomp and empty glory. It may only be a rearpost—way out where Europe kneels to the Atlantic—and where one can pray for peace. But war is there, after all.



## CHAPTER XXI

### MYTHS

THE European war zone at the beginning of hostilities was as busy a fable factory as were San Juan and Santiago during the Spanish-American conflict when "yellow journalism" was supposed to have reached its zenith. It was a great pity, for the truth of the European war is stupendous enough. Newspaper myths and yellow faking have never had less excuse. In many cases it may take years to properly classify the facts.

Not all of the myths have been deliberate ones. At the outbreak of the war rumor followed rumor so swiftly, and was so often attested by the statements of "eye-witnesses," that inevitably it was transformed *en route* from fancy into fact. Sometimes a tense public itself raised definitely labeled rumors to the rank of official communications. In a few instances war correspondents have deliberately faked.

The censorship, generally unintelligent, sometimes incredibly stupid, is responsible for a great many myths. "Beating the censor" was a gleeful

game for some correspondents until it became clear that the censor always held the winning hand, and that he could even suppress their activities altogether. The "half truths" of the official communications have also been responsible for much flavoring of the real news with fiction.

The similarity in names of the river Sambre and Somme, the one being in Belgium and the other in France, undoubtedly had much to do with the wording of the French communiqués when France was first invaded. Day after day the despatches laconically referred to "the fighting on the Sambre." Then one Sunday morning, when it was considered impossible to keep back the truth much longer, a casual communiqué mentioned the fighting line "on the Somme." The press of the world, which had been deliberately kept in the dark for days, can scarcely be blamed for losing its head a trifle and printing scare headlines unprecedented since news became a commodity.

The greatest of all war fakes, and one that had not the slightest foundation of truth, is the story of the Russian army rushed from Archangel to Scotland, thence through England to France to aid at the battle of the Marne. This story is entirely discredited to-day, but it died hard, and no wonder, for there never was a story with so

many "eye witnesses," so much "absolute proof" of its authenticity. From the highlands of Scotland to the hamlets of Brittany peasants were awakened at night by the tramp of marching feet. Upon investigation the Cossacks of the Czar were revealed hurrying on their way to the western battle line. I have never heard where the story originated, but every correspondent with the Allied forces believed it. A friend living near a French seaport whose honesty I can not question, wrote to me telling in detail of the landing of an entire Russian army corps. I talked with officers of both the English and French armies who swore to a definite knowledge that Russians were then in France and would soon be fighting in the front line. To my recollection the story was never denied, and only the fact that the Russians never did reach that front line where they were so eagerly awaited, brought the story into the classification where it belonged.

Another great fake, but different from this one in that it had a slight foundation of truth, is the story of the French taxicab army under General Galliéni, that swept out of Paris forty to eighty thousand strong (accounts differed) and which fell on the flank of the Germans and saved the city. This story became the most popular of the

entire war, and it is still implicitly believed by thousands of persons. I saw that taxicab army and am therefore able to state that about ninety per cent. of the story written about it is fiction. The ten per cent. fact is that the army of General Manoury was in process of formation for days before the battle of the Marne. The troops were sent around and through Paris to occupy a position west of Compiègne. I watched thousands of them, the Senegalese division, march through Paris on foot during the latter days of August, 1914. It was the methodical, though hasty, creation by the General Staff of a new army. At the same time the General Staff was conducting, under General Joffre, the great retreat from Charleroi.

At the beginning of the battle of the Marne a few regiments were still in Paris. The Military Governor, General Galliéni, was instructed to rush them north by any means available. The northern railways were in German hands, and the only way was to send them in taxicabs. So many chauffeurs had been mobilized that Paris had then probably not more than two thousand taxis. At the tightest squeeze not more than four soldiers with heavy marching equipment, could have been carried in one of the small Paris taxicabs. The

taxicab army, therefore, may have numbered four regiments, or eight thousand men, while the real figures may possibly be less. It was not the army of Paris gallantly rushing out to save the city. The army of Paris had instructions to remain in the city and to defend it. The taxicab army was a fine and dramatic piece of news, expanded to fit the imagination of an excited world.

The fable factory actually began operations before the declaration of war, when with the sudden shortage of money, tales of starving and otherwise suffering American tourists were cabled to New York by the yellow press. But the Paris papers, and the general press, awaited mobilization orders before becoming graphic without the support of facts.

On the first day of hostilities several papers printed thrilling details of the airman Garros having brought down a Zeppelin. Garros was then waiting for military orders at his Paris apartment and laughed heartily at the story when I telephoned to him.

Four times during the first month of the war I read of the death of the airman Vedrines. Six months later I met him on one of my trips to the front. The death of Max Linder, the comedian, was also dramatically related by the Paris press,

but a few nights later I found Linder on the *terrasse* of a boulevard café relating his very live adventure in getting there.

Leaving out of consideration the feelings of the men's families these were after all comparatively harmless and unimportant fakes. A more sinister story, hinted at for weeks and finally openly printed, was that a certain French general had been shot for treachery while stationed near the Belgian frontier. So persistent was this report that it was finally necessary for General Joffre himself to issue a statement that the general in question was alive and well and had merely been removed to another field of active service.

Of all the fakes and all the fakirs, I believe the French authorities will admit that the greatest offenders have been their own papers. The English correspondents were always fairly reliable, while the accounts furnished the American papers have received the least criticism of all—and the greatest praise. The most outstanding example of incorrect information appearing in the British press was a story early in the war that the British expeditionary force had been entirely destroyed. It is only just to state that the writer of the story was ignorant of his facts and not a wilful fakir. Nevertheless he has since been *persona non grata*



in France and has confined his activities to the Russian front.

Not all of the American accounts have been free from faking. One American correspondent printed an "exclusive interview" with President Poincaré which he declared was arranged and took place on the battlefield. This story was entirely false, the correspondent merely seeing the President reviewing the troops, a dozen other correspondents having the same privilege.

The most glaring example of inaccuracy upon the part of an American writer was an account of the battle of Ypres which appeared in both English and American publications. This account, giving the entire credit for the victory to the English, with faint praise for the French, was resented by both the English and French officers, the former as sportsmen not wishing undue praise, and the latter naturally piqued that a story having such wide circulation should not have been based more materially upon facts. This correspondent was later denied the privilege of visiting the French front and has retired from the zone of military activity.

Most of the fakes, as I have shown, occurred at the beginning of the war, or during the first six months, when all the world was in a state of great

excitement, and when correspondents, the majority of whom had never seen a war before, should have been forgiven for sometimes letting their imaginations run riot. During the past twelve months, since organization has taken the place of chaos in so many activities related to the war, and when correspondents have acquired experience and perspective, I know of scarcely any cases of wilful misrepresentation of the truth. During the battle of Champagne in September, 1915, one correspondent did attempt to project his astral body to the battlefield for the purpose of writing an "eye witness" account of the fighting; but he paid dearly for the indiscretion. He was at once crossed off the official list of correspondents at the French war office and all his credentials were withdrawn for the duration of the war.

## CHAPTER XXII

### WHEN CHENAL SINGS THE "MARSEILLAISE"

I WENT to the Opéra Comique one day to hear Marthe Chenal sing the "Marseillaise." For several weeks previous I had heard a story going the rounds of what is left of Paris life to the effect that if one wanted a regular old-fashioned thrill he really should go to the Opéra Comique on a day when Mlle. Chenal closed the performance by singing the French national hymn. I was told there would be difficulty in securing a seat.

I was rather skeptical. I also considered that I had had sufficient thrills since the beginning of the war, both old-fashioned and new. I believed also that I had already heard the "Marseillaise" sung under the best possible circumstances to produce thrills. One of the first nights after mobilization 10,000 Frenchmen filled the street beneath the windows of the *New York Times* office where I was at work. They sang the "Marseillaise" for two hours, with a solemn hatred of their national enemy sounding in every note. The so-

lemnity changed to a wild passion as the night wore on. Finally, cuirassiers of the guard rode through the street to disperse the mob. It was a terrific scene.

So I was willing to admit that the "Marseillaise" is probably the most thrilling and most martial national song ever written, but I was just not keen on the subject of thrills.

Then one day a sedate friend went to the Opéra Comique and it was a week before his ardor subsided. He declared that this rendition of a song was something that will be referred to in future years. "Why," he said, "when the war is over the French will talk about it in the way Americans still talk about Jenny Lind at Castle Garden, or De Wolf Hopper reciting 'Casey at the Bat.' "

This induced me to go. I was convinced that whether I got a thrill or not the singing of the "Marseillaise" by Chenal had become a distinct feature of Paris life during the war.

I never want to go again. To go again might deepen my impression—might better register the thrill. But then it might not be just the same. I would be keyed to such expectancy that I might be disappointed. Persons in the seats behind me might whisper. And just as Chenal got to the "Amour sacré de la patrie" some one might

cough. I am confident that something of the sort would surely happen. I want always to remember that ten minutes while Chenal was on the stage just as I remember it now. So I will not go again.

The first part of the performance was Donizetti's "Daughter of the Regiment," beautifully sung by members of the regular company. But somehow the spectacle of a fat soprano nearing forty in the rôle of the twelve-year-old vivandière, although impressive, was not sublime. A third of the audience were soldiers. In the front row of the top balcony were a number of wounded. Their bandaged heads rested against the rail. Several of them yawned.

After the operetta came a "Ballet of the Nations." The "nations," of course, represented the Allies. We had the delectable vision of the Russian ballerina dancing with arms entwined about several maids of Japan. The Scotch lassies wore violent blue jackets. The Belgian girls carried large pitchers and rather wept and watered their way about the stage. There were no thrills.

After the intermission there was not even available space. The majority of the women were in black—the prevailing color in these days. The



MDLLE. CHENAL SINGING THE MARSEILLAISE





only touches of brightness and light were in the uniforms of the officers liberally sprinkled through the orchestra and boxes.

Then came "Le Chant du Depart," the famous song of the Revolution. The scene was a little country village. The principals were the officer, the soldier, the wife, the mother, the daughter and the drummer boy. There was a magnificent soldier chorus and the fanfare of drums and trumpets. The audience then became honestly enthusiastic. I concluded that the best Chenal could do with the "Marseillaise," which was next on the program, would be an anti-climax.

The orchestra played the opening bars of the martial music. With the first notes the vast audience rose. I looked up at the row of wounded leaning heavily against the rail, their eyes fixed and staring on the curtain. I noticed the officers in the boxes, their eyes glistening. I heard a convulsive catch in the throats of persons about me. Then the curtain lifted.

I do not remember what was the stage setting. I do not believe I saw it. All I remember was Chenal standing at the top of a short flight of steps, in the center near the back drop. I indistinctly remember that the rest of the stage was filled with the soldier chorus and that near the

footlights on either side were clusters of little children.

“Up, sons of France, the call of glory—”

Chenal swept down to the footlights. The words of the song swept over the audience like a bugle call. The singer wore a white silk gown draped in perfect Grecian folds. She wore the large black Alsatian head dress, in one corner of which was pinned a small tricolored cockade. She has often been called the most beautiful woman in Paris. The description was too limited. With the next lines she threw her arms apart, drawing out the folds of the gown into the tricolor of France—heavy folds of red silk draped over one arm and blue over the other. Her head was thrown back. Her tall, slender figure simply vibrated with the feeling of the words that poured forth from her lips. She was noble. She was glorious. She was sublime. With the “March on, march on,” of the chorus, her voice arose high and fine over the full orchestra, and even above her voice could be sensed the surging emotions of the audience that seemed to sweep over the house in waves.

I looked up at the row of wounded. One man held his bandaged head between his hands and

was crying. An officer in a box, wearing the gorgeous uniform of the headquarters staff, held a handkerchief over his eyes.

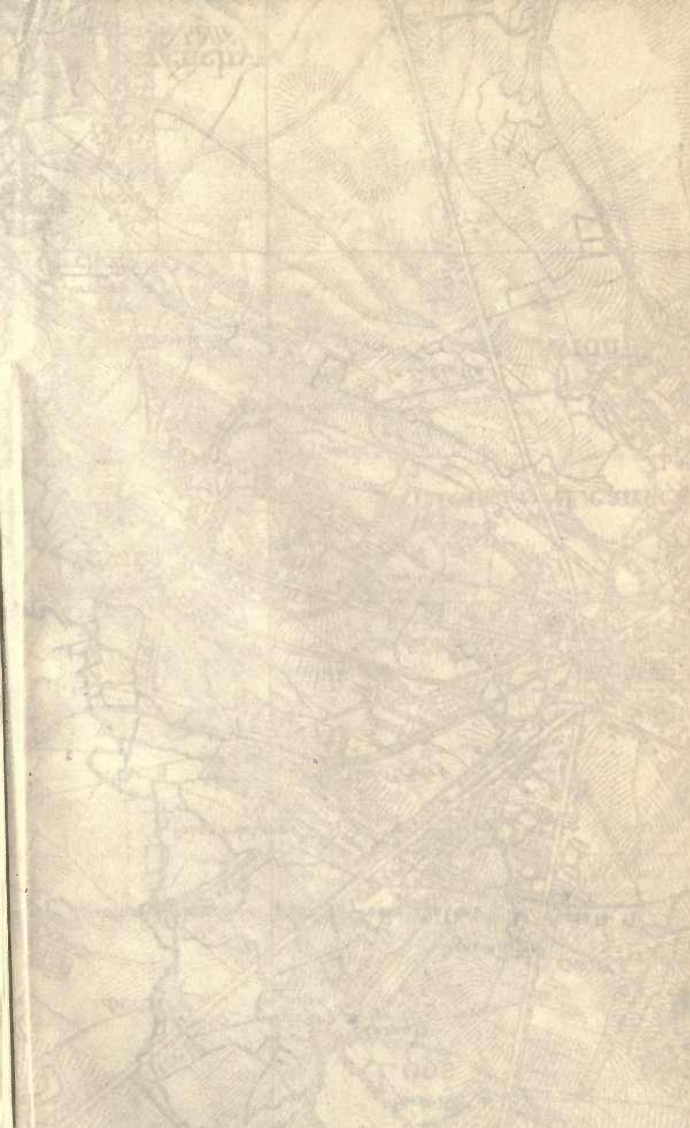
Through the second verse the audience alternately cheered and stamped their feet and wept. Then came the wonderful "Amour sacré de la patrie"—sacred love of home and country—verse. The crashing of the orchestra ceased, dying away almost to a whisper. Chenal drew the folds of the tricolor cloak about her. Then she bent her head and, drawing the flag to her lips, kissed it reverently. The first words came like a sob from her soul. From then until the end of the verse, when her voice again rang out over the renewed efforts of the orchestra, one seemed to live through all the glorious history of France. At the very end, when Chenal drew a short jeweled sword from the folds of her gown and stood, silent and superb, with the folds of the flag draped around her, while the curtain rang slowly down, she seemed to typify both Empire and Republic throughout all time. All the best of the past seemed concentrated there as that glorious woman, with head raised high, looked into the future.

And as I came out of the theater with the silent

audience I said to myself that a nation with a song and a patriotism such as I had witnessed could not vanish from the earth—nor again be vanquished.

THE END







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